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[illegible] solitary Post Office in the Cabin of a settler, he finds a letter from home, & he lays the reins upon his saddlebow, & reads the welcome pages, while his horse willing to [illegible], walks slowly through the forest

Page 145

THE

WAY TO DO GOOD,

OR

THE

WAY TO DO GOOD,

OR

the Christian Character Mature

by Jacob Abbott.

The little snow bird hops along before you.

P. 235

Boston,

WILLIAM PEIRCE, 9 CORNHILL.

THE

69016

WAY TO DO GOOD:

OR THE

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER MATURE.

THE SEQUEL TO

THE

YOUNG CHRISTIAN AND CORNER-STONE.

BY JACOB ABBOTT.

BOSTON:
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PREFACE.

Upon the Corner-Stone of faith in Jesus Christ, as the atoning sacrifice for sin, there is reared the superstructure of holy life and action; and a holy life, is one which, from the impulse of love to God, is occupied in doing good to man. The Young Christian was intended to introduce the reader to the first steps of the Christian life; the Corner-Stone to explain some of the simpler elements of revealed religion; and now this work is intended to close the series, by giving the reader some general directions in respect to the great work which God has given him here to do.

In thus bringing this series of Illustrations of Christianity to a close, I cannot but express my acknowledgments for the favorable manner with which the community has received these humble attempts to divest religion of its theological and scholastic garb, and to present it in its simplicity, to the common classes of society. I have been indebted to the criticisms which the former volumes have called forth, for many valuable suggestions, of which I have availed myself in the later editions of those volumes, and sometimes in the trains of thought pursued in this. Now, however, although I bring the series to a close, the reader must not expect to find that the whole ground is explored, nor complain if he finds many important subjects wholly omitted. To go over the whole field of religious truth and duty, as minutely as I have examined those particular

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views of it which are brought forward in this work, would require a hundred volumes instead of three. I hope, therefore, that the critic will not charge me with culpable omissions, even if he should find some important subjects not treated of in these volumes.

There is one subject to which I wish the above remarks to be especially applied. I mean the great subject of *progress in personal holiness* I should be very sorry, if, by devoting my concluding volume to instructions on the Way to Do Good, I should convey the idea that the proper performance of outward acts of benevolence constitutes the sole, or even the principal work of the Christian life. To describe the believer's inward conflicts with sin, his trials, and temptations, and struggles; his fears, and hopes, and joys; to delineate, in a word, the road by which he finds his way from step to step, to the highest degree of personal sanctification attainable here, is a task of a very far higher character than any which I have attempted in these volumes. That road is one which can be described only by one who has travelled it; and years of extended Christian experience, or else very uncommon spiritual qualifications, could alone justify the attempt.

Though these works are thus necessarily limited in respect to their range, I have endeavored to exhibit nothing in them but truth. I have endeavored to exhibit that truth too, which is most obvious, and most important in its bearings; and which may have the most immediate and direct influence upon the feelings of the heart, in promoting intelligent, devoted and happy piety.

THE AUTHOR.

Boston, March, 1836.

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THE

WAY TO DO GOOD.

CHAPTER I.

WORKS AND FAITH, OR THE STORY OF ALONZO.

"*Created* in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Works and Faith.	Alonzo's home.	The farm-yard.

THE exact nature of the connection which subsists between faith and good works, in the salvation of man, is a subject, which, in a volume on THE WAY TO DO GOOD, ought to be well understood at the outset. I can best convey to my young reader what I wish to say on this point, by telling him the story of Alonzo.

Alonzo was a Vermont boy. His father lived in one of those warm and verdant dells which give a charm to the scenery of the Green Mountains. The low, broad farm-house, with its barns and sheds, hay-stacks and high wood piles, made almost a little village, as they lay spread out in a sunny opening near the head of the glen. A winding road repeatedly crossing a brook which meandered among the trees, down the valley, guided the traveller to the spot. The wide yard was filled with domestic animals, the sheds were well stored with the utensils of the farm, lilac trees and rose bushes ornamented the front of the dwelling, and from the midst of a little green lawn upon one side of the house, was a deep clear spring, walled in with moss covered stones, and pouring up continually from below, a full supply of cool, clear water. A group of willows hung over the spring, and a well-trod foot path led to it from the house

A smooth flat stone lay before the "end door," as they called it, which led to the spring. Here, during the second year of his life, Alonzo might have been seen almost every sunny day, playing with buttercups and daisies, or digging with the kitchen shovel in the earth before the door, or building houses of corn-cobs, brought for his amusement, in a basket, from the granary. The next summer, had you watched him, you would have observed that his range was wider, and his plans of amusement a little more enlarged. He had a garden, two feet square, where he stuck down green sprigs, broken from the shrubs around him, and he would make stakes with a dull house knife partly for the pleasure of making them, and partly for the pleasure of driving them into the ground. He would ramble up and down the path a little way, and sometimes go with his mother down to the spring, to see her dip the bright tin pail into the water, and to gaze with astonishment at the effect of the commotion,—for the stony wall of the spring seemed always to be broken to pieces, and its fragments waved and floated about, in confusion, until gradually they returned to their places and to rest, and for ought he could see, looked exactly as before. This extraordinary phenomenon astonished him again and again.

One day Alonzo's mother saw him going alone, down towards the spring. He had got the pail, and was going to try the wonderful experiment himself. His mother called him back, and forbade his ever going there alone. "If you go there alone," said she, "you will fall in and be drowned."

Alonzo was not convinced by the reason, but he was awed by the command, and for many days he obeyed. At length, however, when his mother was occupied in another part of the house, he stole away softly down the path a little way.

There was a sort of a struggle going on within him while he was doing this. "Alonzo," said Conscience, for even

at this early age, Conscience had begun to be developed, "Alonzo, this is very wrong."

Conscience must be conquered, if conquered at all, not by direct opposition, but by evasion and deceit, and the deceiving and deceitful tendencies of the heart, are very early developed.

"I am not going down to the spring," said Alonzo to himself, "I am only going down the path, a little way."

"Alonzo," said Conscience, again, "this is wrong."

"Mother will not see me, and I shall not go quite down to the water, so that no harm will be done," said the child to himself in reply,—and went hesitatingly on.

"Alonzo," said Conscience, a third time, but with a feebler voice,—"you ought not to go any farther."

"My mother is too strict with me,—there can be no harm in my walking as far as this."

He lingered a little while about half way down the path, and then slowly returned,—the dialogue between Conscience and his heart going on all the time. The latter had succeeded so well in its artful policy, that when he came back, he really hardly knew whether he had done wrong or not. It did not seem quite right, and there was a sort of gnawing uneasiness within him, but his heart had succeeded by its evasions and subterfuges in making so much of a question of the whole transaction, that he could not really say that it was clearly wrong. Alonzo had been taught that God had made him, and that he watched over him at all times, but some how or other, he did not happen to think of him at all during this affair. He had also understood something of his obligations to his mother, for her kindness and love to him;—but he did not happen to think of her now in this light. The contest consisted simply, on the one side, of the low murmurings of conscience, telling him sternly that he was wrong, and on the other, the turnings and shiftings and windings of a deceitful heart trying to quiet her, or at least to drown her remonstrances.

Self deception. A second transgression. Progress in sin.

I have dwelt thus particularly upon the philosophy of this early sin, because this was the way in which Alonzo committed all his sins for many years afterwards. Conscience made him uncomfortable while he was transgressing, but then his heart kept up such a variety of evasions and queries, and brought in so many utterly foreign considerations, that whenever he was doing any thing wrong, he never seemed to have, at the time while he was doing it, *a distinct idea that it was clearly and positively wrong*. For instance, a few days after the transaction above described, his mother had gone away to spend some hours, and his sister who had the care of him, had left him alone at the door. He took up the pail, and began to walk slowly down the path. Conscience, defeated before, and familiarized to a certain degree of transgression, allowed him to go without opposition a part of the way, but when she perceived that he was actually approaching the spring, she shook her head and renewed her low, solemn murmuring.

"Alonzo, Alonzo, you must not go there."

"I shall not fall in, I know;" said Alonzo to himself.

"Alonzo, Alonzo, Alonzo," said Conscience again,—"you must not disobey."

Alonzo tried not to hear her, and instead of answering, he said to himself,

"It was many days ago, that she told me not to come. She did not mean *never*."

This was true literally, and yet it may seem surprising that Alonzo could for one instant deceive himself with such an argument. But any thing will do to deceive ourselves with. When we are committing sin, we love to be deceived about it. Hence it is very easy.

While saying that his mother could not have meant that he must never come, Alonzo leaned over the spring, and tremblingly plunged in his pail. The magic effect was produced. The stones and moss waved and quivered, to Alonzo's inexpressible delight. His mind was in a state of

feverish excitement,—Conscience calling upon him, and in vain trying to make him hear,—fear whispering eagerly, that he might be seen,—and curiosity urging him again and again to repeat his wonderful experiment.

Alonzo was a very little child, and the language in which I am obliged to describe his mental states, and the words with which I clothe his thoughts, may seem more mature than the reality in such a case could have been. In fact they are so. He could not have used such language, and yet it describes correctly the thoughts and feelings which really passed within his bosom.

At length, he hastily drew out his pail, and went back to the house. Conscience endeavored, then, when the excitement of the experiment was over, to gain his attention. His heart still bent on deceiving and being deceived, evaded the subject.

"My mother said," thought he, "that I should fall in and be drowned if I went there, and I did not fall in; I knew I should not fall in."

Thus instead of thinking of his guilt and disobedience, he was occupied with the thought of the advantage he had gained over his mother,—that is, the heart which ought to have been penitent and humbled, under the burden of sin, was deluding itself with the false colors which it had spread over its guilt, and was filled with deceit and self-congratulation.

Year after year passed on, and Alonzo grew in strength and stature; but he continued about the same in heart. Instead of playing on the round, flat door stone, he at length might be seen riding on his father's plough,—or tossing about the drying grass in the mowing field,—or gathering berries upon the hill side, on some summer afternoon. He was continually committing sins in the manner already described. These sins were different in circumstance and character as he grew older, but their nature, so far as the feelings of the heart were concerned, were the

same. There was the same murmuring of conscience; the same windings and evasions of his heart; the same self deception; the same success in leading himself to doubt, whether the act of transgression, which for the time being he was committing, was right or wrong. His parents in most respects, brought him up well. They taught him his duty, and when they knew that he did wrong, they remonstrated with him seriously, or, if necessary, they punished him. Thus his conscience was cherished, and kept alive, as it were, and he was often deterred by her voice from committing many sins. She held him much in check. His parents formed in him many good habits which he adhered to faithfully as habits,—and thus so far as the influence of his parents could go, in aiding conscience, and in habituating him to certain duties,—so far he was, in most cases, deterred from the commission of sin. Other things, however, equally sinful, he did without scruple. For example, he would have shuddered at stealing even a pin from his sister; but he would by unreasonable wishes and demands, give her as much trouble, and occasion her as much loss of enjoyment, as if he had stolen a very valuable article from her. If he had undertaken to steal a little picture from her desk, conscience would have thundered so terribly that he could not possibly have proceeded; but he could tease and vex her by his unreasonable and selfish conduct, without any remorse. If his heart had been honest and shrewd in discovering its own real character, these cases would have taught him that his honesty was artificial and accidental, and did not rest on any true foundation,—but his heart was not honest, nor shrewd in respect to itself; it loved to be deceived, and when he read of a theft in a story book, he took great pleasure in thinking what a good honest boy he himself was.

So he would not, on any account, have omitted to say his prayers, morning and night; but whenever he committed sin in the course of the day, he never thought of going

away alone before God to confess it, and to ask forgiveness. Now if his heart had been honest and shrewd in discovering his own character, this would have taught him that his piety was all a mere form, and that he had no real affection for God. But his heart was not thus honest and shrewd, and though he never thought much about it, he still had an impression on his mind that he was the friend of God, and that he regularly worshipped him. He knew very well that he sometimes committed sin, but he did not suppose that it was often. For as we have already explained, it was very seldom, when he was actually engaged in transgression, that he had a distinct and clear conception that what he was then doing was positively wrong. He always so far succeeded in blinding or misleading conscience as to make it doubtful. And if he could succeed in making a question of it, he would go and commit the sin, with a half formed idea of examining the case afterwards. But then when the pleasure of the sin was over, he found the true moral character of the transaction to be, somehow or other, rather a disagreeable subject to investigate; so he left it, laid away, as it were, in his memory, to fester and rankle there. And though he had such a number of these recollections as to give him no little uneasiness and annoyance, he still thought he was a very virtuous and promising young man.

One day, Alonzo made a discovery which startled and alarmed him a little. He was about twelve years old. Some young men had formed a plan of ascending a certain mountain summit, the extremity of a lofty ridge, which projected like a spur from the main range, and which reared its rocky head among the clouds, in full view from his father's door. They had fixed upon Sabbath evening for this purpose, an hour or two before sun-down. "A great many people, you know," said one of the boys, "think that the Sabbath ends at sunset, and an hour or so before will not make any great difference. We must be up in season to see the sun go down." This disposal of the difficulty,

was abundantly satisfactory to all those who were inclined to go, but Alonzo had some doubts whether it would appear equally conclusive to his father and mother. One thing favored, however. His father was away, having been absent on some business for the town, for several days; and Alonzo thought that there was at least a possibility that his mother would find the deficiencies in the reasoning made up by a little extra persuasion, and that her consent to his sharing in the pleasure of the excursion would be obtained. At any rate, it was plainly worth while to try.

He accordingly came in on Saturday afternoon, and standing by the side of his mother, who was finishing some sewing necessary to complete her preparations for the Sabbath, with much hesitancy and circumlocution he preferred his request. She listened to him with surprise, and then told him he must not go.

"It would be very wrong," said she.

"But, mother, we shall walk along very still; we will not laugh or play. It will only be taking a little walk after sun-down."

Alonzo's mother was silent.

"Come, mother," said the boy, hoping that he had made some impression, "*do* let me go. Do say yes,—just this once."

After a moment's pause, she replied,

"Some persons do indeed suppose that the Sabbath ends at sun-down, but we think it continues till midnight, and we cannot shift and change the hours to suit our pleasures. Now, with all your resolutions about walking *still*, you know very well that such an expedition, with such companions, will not be keeping holy the Sabbath-day. You come to me therefore with a proposal that I will allow you to disobey, directly and openly, one of the plainest of God's commands It is *impossible* that I should consent."

While his mother was saying these words, emotions of anger and indignation began to rise and swell in Alonzo's

bosom, until, at length, foreseeing how the sentence would end, he began to walk off towards the door, and almost before the last words were uttered, he was gone. He shut the door violently, muttering to himself, "It is always just so."

In a state of wretchedness and sin, which my readers, if they have ever acted as Alonzo did, must conceive of, he walked out of the house, and sank down upon a bench which he had made in the little orchard. Here he gave full flow for a few minutes, to the torrent of boiling passion which had so suddenly burst out of his heart. In a short time, however, the excitement of his feelings subsided a little, and there came suddenly a sort of flash of moral light, which seemed to reveal to him for an instant the true character of the transaction.

Something within him seemed to say, "What an unreasonable, ungrateful, wicked boy you are, Alonzo. Here is your mother,—as kind a mother as ever lived. You owe her your very being. She has taken care of you for years, without any return, and has done every thing to make you happy; and now because she cannot consent to let you do what is most clearly wrong, your heart is full of anger, malice and revenge. What a heart! Love, duty,—all are forgotten, and every feeling of gratitude for long years of kindness is obliterated, by one single interference with your wicked desires."

This reflection, which it will require some time to read, occupied but an instant in passing through Alonzo's mind. It flashed upon him for a moment, and was gone,—and the dark, heavy clouds of anger and ill will, rolled again over his soul. He sat upon the bench in moody silence.

At length, he began again to see that he was very wrong; such feelings towards his mother, were, he knew, unreasonable and sinful, and he determined that he would not indulge them. So he rose, and walked through a small gate, into the yard, where a large pile of long logs were

lying, one of which had been rolled down and partly cut off. He took up the axe and went to work. But he soon learned that it was one thing to see that his feelings were wrong, and another thing to *feel right*. His mind was in a sort of chaos. Floating visions of the party ascending the hill,—vexation at his disappointment,—uneasiness at the recollection of his unkind treatment of his mother, all mingled together in his soul. "I wish I *could* feel right towards mother about this," said he to himself; but somehow or other, there seemed gathering over his heart a kind of casing of dogged sullenness, which he could not break or dispel. At least he thought he could not. So he rather concluded it was best to forget the whole affair for the present. He laid down the axe, therefore, and began to pick up some chips and sticks to carry in for kindling the morning fire; and he secretly determined that when he went in and met his mother again, he would not evince any more of his impatience and anger, but would act "just as if nothing had happened."

Just as if nothing had happened! What, after such an act of disrespect, ingratitude and disobedience, act as if nothing had happened!

But Alonzo did not make any such reflection. His heart, clinging to his sin, loved to be deceived by it. It seemed to him impossible to feel the relenting of true, heartfelt penitence, and that love and gratitude which he knew his mother deserved, — and especially that cheerful acquiescence in her decision, which he knew he ought to feel. So he concluded to forget all about it,—and the poisoned fountain which had so suddenly burst forth in his heart, was covered up again, and smoothed over, ready to boil out anew, upon any new occasion.

This and a few other similar occurrences, led Alonzo sometimes to think that there might be deeper sources of moral difficulty in his heart, than he had been accustomed to imagine; but he did not think much about it, and his

life passed on without much thought or care, in respect to his character or prospects as a moral being. He had, however, a sort of standing suspicion that there was something wrong,—quite wrong, but he did not stop to examine the case. The little uneasiness which this suspicion caused, was soothed and quieted a good deal, by a sort of prevailing idea, that after all, there was a great deal that was very excellent in his conduct and character. He was generally considered a pretty good boy. He knew this, very well; and one of the grossest of the forms of deceitfulness which the heart assumes, is, to believe that we deserve all that others give us credit for, even where the good qualities in question are merely the most superficial and shallow pretence.

One incident occurred about this time, which almost opened Alonzo's eyes to the true character of some of his *virtues*. During the winter months he went to school, and the good qualities which he fancied he exhibited there, were among those on which he most prided himself. One afternoon, as he was walking home, with a green satchel full of books slung over his shoulder, he stopped a few minutes at the brook which crossed the road, and looked down over the bridge upon the smooth dark colored ice which covered the deep water. It looked so clear and beautiful, that he went down and cautiously stepped upon it. It was so transparent that it seemed impossible that it could be strong. He sat down on a stone which projected out of the water, and while he was there the teacher came along, and stopping on the bridge, began to talk with him. Alonzo and the teacher were on very good terms, and after talking together a few minutes at the brook, they both walked along together.

Their way was a cross path through the woods, which led by a shorter course than the main road, to the part of the town where they were both going.

"Alonzo," said the teacher, as they were stepping over

a low place in the log fence where their path diverged from the road;—"I am glad to see you carrying your books home."

"I like to study my lessons at home in the evenings," said Alonzo, with a feeling of secret satisfaction.

"Well, Alonzo, what should you say if I should tell you I could guess exactly what books you have got in your satchel?"

"I do 'nt know," said Alonzo,—"perhaps you saw me put them in."

"No, I did not."

"Well, you can tell by the shape of the books,—which you can see by looking at the satchel."

"No," said the teacher, "I see you have got either your writing book or your Atlas, but I could not tell which by the appearance of the satchel. I see also, that there is by the side of it, one middle sized book besides; but its size merely will not tell whether it is your Arithmetic or your Grammar or your Geography."

"Well, what do you think they are?"

"I think they are your writing book, and your spelling book."

There was in Alonzo's countenance an appearance of surprise and curiosity. He said the teacher was right, and asked him how he knew.

"I know by your character."

"By my character!" said Alonzo, "What do you mean by that?"

"I will tell you; but I think it will give you pain, rather than pleasure. You are one of the best boys in my school, —you give me very little trouble, and are generally diligent in your duties; and obedient and faithful. Now, have you ever thought what your *motives* are for this?"

"No sir, I have never thought about it very particularly. I want to improve my time, and learn as much as I can, so as to be useful when I am a man."

Alonzo thought that that *ought to be* his motive, and so he fancied that it was. He did not mean to tell a falsehood. He did not say it because he wished to deceive his teacher, but because his heart had deceived *him*. It is so with us all.

"You think so, I have no doubt. But now I wish to ask you one question. What two studies do you think you are most perfect in?"

Alonzo did not like to answer, though he knew that he prided himself much on his handsome writing, and on his being almost always at the head of his class in spelling. At length he said, with a modest air, that he thought he "took as much interest in his writing and in his spelling lessons, as in any thing."

"Are there any studies that you are less advanced in than in these?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," said the teacher, "now I want to ask you one question. How happens it that the writing book and the spelling book, which represent the two studies in which you have made the greatest proficiency, and in which you, of course, least need any extra efforts, are the very ones which you are bringing home to work upon in the evenings?"

Alonzo did not answer immediately. In fact, he had no answer at hand. He thought, however, that if he was inclined to study out of school hours, he had a right to take any books home that he pleased. But he did not say so.

"And I should like to ask you one more question;" said the teacher. "In what study do you think you are most deficient?"

"I suppose it is my Arithmetic," said Alonzo: recollecting how he disliked, and avoided as much as possible, every thing connected with calculation.

"And do you ever carry home your Arithmetic to study in the evening?"

Alonzo's perplexity. His reflections.

Alonzo shook his head. He knew he did not.

"Well. Now you know very well that there is no knowledge obtained at school more important to a man than a knowledge of figures. How does it happen then, if your motive is to fit yourself for usefulness and happiness when a man, that the very study in which you are most deficient, is the very one in which you never make any voluntary effort?"

Here was a little pause, during which Alonzo looked serious. He felt very unhappy. It seemed to him that his teacher was unkind. When he was bringing his books home to study his lesson for the next day on purpose to please the teacher,—to be blamed just because he had not happened to bring his Arithmetic instead of his Spelling-book, was very hard. Tears came to his eyes, but he strove to suppress them, and said nothing.

"I know, Alonzo," continued the teacher, "that these questions of mine will trouble you. But I have not asked them for the sake of troubling you, but for the purpose of letting you see into your heart and learn a lesson of its deceitfulness. I want you to think of this to-night when you are alone, and perhaps I will some day talk with you again."

So saying, they came out into the road again, near the teacher's residence. They bade one another good-by, and Alonzo walked on alone.

"He means," thought he, "that if I honestly wanted to improve, I should take most interest in the studies in which I am deficient." And as this thought floated through his mind, it brought after it, a dim momentary vision of the pride and vanity and love of praise, which he suddenly saw revealed as the secret spring of all those excellences at school, on which he had so prided himself. But to see all those fancied virtues of industry, and love of learning, and desire to be conscientious and faithful, wither at once, under the magic influence of two such simple questions,

and turn into vanity and self-conceit, afforded him no pleasant subject of reflection. He was glad, therefore, to see a load of wood coming into his father's yard as he appoached it, and he hastened to "help them unload." He thus got rid of the disagreeable subject, without actually deciding whether the teacher was right or wrong.

The affair, however, shook, and weakened very much, his faith in the good traits of his character. He did not come to the distinct conclusion that they were all hollow and superficial, but he had a sort of vague fear that they might prove so,—an undefined notion that they would not bear examination. This was another source of uneasiness laid up in his heart,—a part of the burden of sin which he bore without thinking much of it, though it fretted and troubled him.

Thus Alonzo lived. From twelve, he passed on to fifteen, and from fifteen to twenty. He became a strong, athletic young man, known and esteemed for his industry, frugality and steadiness of character. The time drew near which was to terminate his minority, and at this age, his moral condition might be summed up thus:

1. The external excellences of his character arose from the influence of his excellent education. This would have been no disparagement to them, if they had been of the right kind;—but they resulted only from the restraints imposed by the opinion of those around him,—from the influence of conscience, which, *in respect to some sins*, had been so encouraged and cultivated by his parents, that it was very uncomfortable for him to act directly counter to her voice, in respect to those sins,—and from the power of habit. His industry, for instance, was based upon the last; his regard for the Sabbath upon the second, and his temperance and steadiness mainly upon the other.

2. He made no regular, systematic effort, to improve his character. In fact, he felt little interest in any plan of this kind. He was much interested in the various plans of cul-

tivation and improvement on his father's farm; but his heart was chiefly set upon the amusements with which the young people of the neighborhood regaled themselves, in hours when work was done;—the sleigh ride,—the singing school,—the fishing party,—the husking. In the evening, he was occupied with some one of these enjoyments, and the next day at his work he was planning another, and thus life glided on. I do not mean that he was entirely indifferent about his character and prospects as a moral being; he did sometimes feel a little uneasiness about them. Such discoveries as I have already described, gave him a momentary glimpse occasionally, of the secrets of his heart, and he had a sort of abiding impression that there was something there, which would not bear examination. It was an unpleasant subject, and he thought that for the present he had better let it rest. As to his character, it was, he knew, superficially fair. He prided himself a good deal upon the appearance it presented towards others, and he did not see how he could improve it much, without making a thorough work among the motives and feelings of his heart. This he could not but strongly shrink from; so he passed quietly along and thought about other things.

3. There was no connection between his soul and God. I mean no spiritual connection,—no communion,—no interchange of thought or of feeling. He was taught to repeat a prayer morning and evening, and this practice he continued,—that is, he considered it one of his duties, and *meant*, generally, to perform it. As he grew up from boyhood, however, he often neglected it in the morning, until at length he omitted it then altogether; and he gradually found an increasing reluctance at night. He often omitted it,—not intentionally, exactly;—he forgot it; or, he was very tired and went immediately to sleep. These omissions, however, which, by the way, were far more frequent than he imagined, did not trouble him as much as it

might have been expected that they would, for he began to think that the practice was intended for children, and that he was getting to be too old to make it necessary that he should attend to it. When he did remember this duty, it was only a form. There was no communion or connection between him and God. So far as the feelings of his heart were concerned, he lived in independence of his Maker.

Such was Alonzo's condition, during the winter before he was to be twenty-one. One evening during that winter, "a meeting" was appointed in the school-house. A stranger was to preach. On such occasions the school-house was always filled. The congregation came from the farmers' families for several miles around; curiosity respecting the stranger, the pleasure of a winter evening's expedition, a sort of intellectual interest in the services, the exhilarating, and animating scene which the room presented,—the light from the great blazing wood fire beaming upon a hundred bright and cheerful countenances,—and in some cases at least, an honest desire to know and do duty, constituted the motives which drew the assembly together. At six o'clock, Alonzo harnessed a strong, fleet, well fed horse into a gaily painted sleigh, and handing his father and mother into the back seat, mounted, himself, upon a higher one in front, and away they went jingling down the valley. They were lost to sight by the turnings of the road among the trees, and the sleigh-bells, sounding fainter and fainter, at length died away upon the ear.

A little before nine, Alonzo might have been seen returning slowly up the valley. The moon had risen, and it shone through the trees, casting a beautiful white light upon the snowy wreaths which hung upon them. The horse walked along slowly, and Alonzo was making crosses with his whip-lash upon the smooth surface of the snow which bordered the road. He was lost in thought. The subject of the sermon which he had heard, was, the importance of preparation for another world; and it happened,

from some cause or other, that Alonzo's mind was in such a calm, contemplative state that evening, that the discourse made a strong impression. It was not an impression made by any extraordinary eloquence. The preacher, in a very quiet, unostentatious, simple manner, presented truths, which Alonzo had heard a thousand times before, though heretofore they had, as it were, stopped at the ear. This night, they seemed to penetrate to his heart. He came out of the meeting thoughtful. He rode home silently. There seemed to be a new view opened before his mind. The future world appeared a *reality* to him; it looked near; and he wondered why he was not making a preparation for it. He rode home thinking of these things silently. His father and mother rode in silence too, each unconscious of the thoughts of the other, but both thinking of their son. An unwonted influence was moving upon the hearts of all.

These serious thoughts passed away the next day, but they left behind a more distinct impression than he had been accustomed to feel, that he had a great work to do before he left the world, and that it was a work which he had not yet begun.

He was careful to say the prayer of his childhood that night, with great seriousness, and he made a great effort to think what it meant, while he was repeating it. It is true that there is a great, and one would suppose, a sufficiently obvious distinction between having the *meaning* of a prayer in the *mind*, and having the *feelings* and *desires* it expresses in the *heart*. But Alonzo did not perceive this distinction. He thought very distinctly of the meaning of the several successive petitions and confessions, and that was all; but it was enough to satisfy a deceiving and deceitful heart, and Alonzo dismissed his cares on the subject of his preparation for death, as he went to sleep, feeling that he had made a good beginning.

Alonzo's attention was occupied early the next morning,

by an excursion into the forest for a load of wood with his father, and he entirely forgot his new religious resolutions, until the evening. This discouraged him a little. He, however, again offered his prayer, with an effort to keep its meaning in his mind, though that effort was less successful than on the evening before. His thoughts would slip away, as it were, from his control, and while he was saying, "My sins have been numerous and aggravated," or "lead me not into temptation," he would find that his mind was dwelling upon the past scenes of the day; it would be off in the forest where he had been at work, or surveying the smooth slopes of hay in the barn loft, or dwelling with pleasure upon the fat sleek sides of Cherry, feeding in the stall.

Alonzo was so dissatisfied with his prayer, that he began again before he got through, though with not much better success than before. He was vexed with himself that he could not confine his attention more easily. He could not understand the reason of it. The obvious explanation,—a heart alienated from God, and eluding by its own spontaneous tendencies, every effort to bring it to him,—he did not see. Willingly deceived, he was spiritually blind.

However, he succeeded so well, that he thought his second prayer would do, and gradually fell asleep.

Weeks passed on, and Alonzo made, in the manner above described, feeble and intermitted efforts to be a religious man. He said nothing of his feelings to any one. In fact, he would not, for the world, have any body know that he had any intention of serving God. Whether it was because he was ashamed to be seen in the service of such a Master, or because he thought that his new feelings were of so high a degree of moral excellence, that modesty required that he should conceal them, we do not say. He was, at any rate, very careful to conceal them.

He made, however, little progress. Weeks and months passed away, and it seemed to him that he remained substantially in the same place. The truth was, there was a

current carrying him down which he did not perceive, but whose effects at distant intervals were very evident. He moved like the little water skipper, whose motions he had often watched, on his father's brook, who now and then makes a convulsive and momentary effort to ascend, but who is borne continually backwards by a current steady and unceasing in its flow, so that notwithstanding his leaps, he drifts insensibly down towards the gulf behind him.

Alonzo was like the skipper, too, in other respects. He saw distinctly his own repeated efforts; but the slow, gentle but continual operation of the current, was unperceived. His face was turned up the stream too, where all was smooth and sunny and beautiful. He did not see the dark gulf that yawned behind.

In a word, Alonzo made but little progress. The work was all up hill. He perceived that on the whole he was not advancing, and yet he could scarcely tell why. There were several difficulties, the operation of which he felt, but there was something mysterious and unaccountable about them.

First he was continually forgetting all his good intentions He would, for example, reflect sometimes on the Sabbath, upon his duties and obligations, and would resolve to be watchful all the coming week to guard against sin, and to keep his heart right. But he found it very hard to control the conduct of one day by the resolutions of the preceding. Saturday night would come, and he would wake up, as it were, from his dream of business and pleasure, and find that his spiritual work had been entirely neglected and forgotten during the week. Half ashamed, and half vexed with himself, he would renew good resolutions to be again neglected and forgotten as before. What could he do? There was no want of good intention in his hours of solitude, but how to give these intentions an arm long enough to reach through the week;—how to make the resolutions of retirement binding upon the conduct during the business

Resolutions. Hoping for a more convenient season.

and bustle of life, was a sore perplexity to him. If he did not think of his resolutions at the right time, of course he could not keep them, and he could contrive no way to secure thinking of them at the right time. There was another difficulty which very much perplexed and troubled Alonzo in his attempts to reform himself. Sometimes it seemed impossible for him to control his wrong feelings. When he became vexed and irritated, as he sometimes did, about his work, or when out of humor on account of some restraint which his mother laid upon him, he was conscious that his feelings were wrong, and he would struggle against them, as he said, with all his strength, but he could not conquer them. He thought he succeeded *partially;* but he was deceived. It was even worse than he supposed. For all the effect of his struggling was only to restrain the *outward manifestation* of his feelings, while they burned on, in his heart, the same. They were too strong for him, he perceived; and then in his despondency he would get lost in the metaphysical difficulties of the question, how far he could be blamed for what it seemed to him he could not help.

Thus, in ordinary temptations, Alonzo never could think of his resolutions, and in extraordinary ones, he never could keep them, and he knew not what to do. And yet he was not very solicitous or anxious about it. There was indeed a vague idea floating in his mind that there was a great work to be done, which was involved in some peculiar difficulties,—a work which he was yet only partially performing. He determined to take hold of it soon, in earnest. In the winter, it was so cold that he could not conveniently spend as much time alone as he wished. He thought that when the warm spring evenings should come, he could enjoy more solitude, and that the spring, therefore, would be a more convenient season. When the spring came, they were pressed with work, and Alonzo looked forward for a time of a little greater leisure. But when planting was done, there was haying, and after hay-

ing, harvesting. Then Alonzo thought that in a few months he should be free, and that he would make such arrangements as to have the more perfect command of his own time. Thus he passed on, thinking that he was watching for an opportunity to do his duty. But he was deceived. The secret was, an innate dislike and repugnance to the work of doing it. There was a strange inconsistency in his ideas. When he tried to purify and reform his heart, he found, or thought he found, that he could not do it. And yet he had an impression, vague and undefined, and yet fixed and confided in, that he could take it up easily at any time, and therefore it was of the less consequence that he waited for a little more convenient season.

This postponement of a thorough attention to the work, did not give him any particular uneasiness, for he was conscious that though he was not doing his duty quite in earnest enough, he still was not entirely neglecting it

Alonzo's father had purchased for him a small farm, a mile or two from his own, and Alonzo was now, for some months, much interested in his preparations for taking possession of it when he should be twenty-one; and then for many months afterwards, his whole soul was engrossed in his plans and labors for repairing the premises, getting his stock in good order, and putting the first seed of his own into the ground. During these months, he remained still a member of his father's family, his own little farm-house being empty and desolate. Occasionally, however, a piece of furniture was brought there, and he would carry it in and fix it in its place, and then survey it again and again with a look of satisfaction. First came a stained birch bureau, then a half dozen of chairs, then a bedstead. A few simple implements for the kitchen followed, and a load of wood was piled up in the yard,—in short the house began to look as if it was really intended to be occupied.

At length, one evening, lights were seen by the distant neighbors in both the rooms,—for there were but two.

Busy preparations were going forward, and at eight o'clock, Alonzo drove up to his door in his own sleigh, and handed out, first his sister, and then the bride, whom he had brought to share with him the responsibilities of his new home.

Alonzo led his horse away to the barn, took off the harness and fastened him to his crib, previously filled to the top with hay. While doing this, he could not help thinking of his obligations to God for the circumstances of prosperity, and the prospects of happiness under which his life had been commenced. He thought *he ought to be* grateful. But this, as he afterwards found, was a different thing from actually being grateful. At any rate, he could not help thinking of his obligations, and of the duty of gratitude, and this reminded him of the question whether he should commence, that evening, family prayer.

"It is your duty to do it;" said Conscience.

"You will not do it properly. You will be embarrassed and perplexed: you cannot begin to-night," said Distrust.

"Still," said Conscience again, "it is your *duty* to do it.'

"You had better wait a day or two till you get settled,—it will be much easier, and more pleasant then," said a lying spirit of evasion and delay.

"It *is your duty to do it to-night,*" murmured Conscience again.

Distracted by the discordant thoughts within him, Alonzo cut short their clamor, by saying to himself that he *could not* begin that night, and hurried in; and the murmurs of conscience grew feebler, and feebler, and at length died completely away.

Alonzo was not to blame for his diffidence,—he was not to blame for shrinking from embarrassment, or for considering the duty before him a real trial,—but if he had actually been grateful to God for his goodness, instead of merely *thinking that he ought to be so*, he would have pressed forward with alacrity to the fulfilment of this duty towards him, even if it had been ten times as painful to perform.

Alonzo found it harder and harder to begin, the longer he postponed it. A month passed away, and the duty continued to be neglected. It was his design to read the Bible every day, but it seemed rather awkward to sit down before his wife, and read it silently and alone, and he gradually neglected that. At night as he went to bed, he usually offered a sort of brief ejaculation, which was, in fact, though he did not perceive it, a sort of compromise to Conscience, to induce her to let him rest in peace. He did not, however, feel happy in this mode of life. Uneasiness and anxiety rankled in his heart more and more, and one evening, after hearing a plain and heartfelt sermon from his minister in the school-house near his farm, he heard him, with pleasure, appoint, what in New England is called "an inquiry meeting," the next evening, at his house. The design of such a meeting, is, to afford an opportunity for more plain and direct and familiar religious instruction to those who feel a personal interest in it, than the formal discourse, offered to a promiscuous assembly, can well contain.

Alonzo and his wife both resolved to go,—and early in the evening, they took their seats with twenty others around their pastor's fireside. Such a meeting is one of great interest and solemnity. It is understood that all present feel a direct personal interest in respect to their own salvation, and they come together with a stillness and solemnity, which scarcely any other assembly exhibits.

The pastor sat by the side of the fire. First he *read* a hymn. It was not sung. Then he offered a short and simple prayer. He then addressed the little assembly much as follows.

"The most important question which you can ask respecting yourselves, is, 'Am I the friend or the enemy of my Maker?' Now, probably, there is not one here, who

really feels that he is his Maker's enemy, and yet it is very possible that there is not one who is not so.

"God justly requires us all to love him,—that is, to feel a personal affection for him, and to act under the influence of it. They who do not, he considers as not belonging to his spiritual family. They are his enemies. Not that they are employed directly and intentionally in opposing him;—they make perhaps no demonstrations of actual hostility; but in heart, they dislike him. To determine, therefore, whether we are the friends or the enemies of God, we must ascertain whether our secret hearts are in a state of *love*, or of *dislike* towards him.

"Methinks, now, I hear you say to yourselves, while I make these remarks, 'I am sure I love God *in some degree*, though I know I do not love him as much as I ought. I pray to him, I try in some things to do my duty, I am, in some degree at least, grateful for his goodness, and I cannot perceive in myself any evidence of a feeling of dislike or hostility.'"

The pastor was right, at least in one instance, for these were exactly the thoughts which were passing through Alonzo's mind.

"Now, it is a difficult thing to tell," continued he, "what the state of our hearts is,—or rather it is a very easy and a very common thing to be deceived about it. I will tell you how.

"1. By mistaking *approbation*, for *love*. We cannot help *approving* God's character. We cannot deny the excellence of justice, mercy and holiness, any more than we can the directness of a straight line which we look upon. Approbation is the decision of the intellect or of the moral sense, which is entirely independent of the feelings of the heart. I once asked a young man whether he thought he loved God. 'O yes,' said he, 'certainly. I

think our Maker is worthy of all our praise and gratitude.' He was blind to the distinction, you see, completely. He thought his Maker *was worthy*. Of course;—he could not help thinking so. The question is not, whether God is worthy of love and gratitude, but whether, in our hearts, we really render these feelings. Now it is very possible that if you look honestly into your hearts, you will find that all your supposed love for God, is only a cold, intellectual admission of the excellence of his character. This may exist without any personal feelings of affection towards him.

"2. The second delusion is similar. We pray and we make effort to confine our attention to our prayers,—or, as we term it, to think what we are saying. This we mistake for really feeling the desires which we express. I doubt not that many of you are in the habit of prayer, and that you often strive to confine your mind to what you are saying. Now you may do all this, without having in the heart any *real desires* for the forgiveness and the holiness and the other blessings you seek. In fact, the very effort you make to confine your mind, proves, or rather indicates very strongly, that the heart is somewhere else; for the mind goes easily where the heart is, and stays there, with out any great effort to confine it.

"3. There is another delusion, similar to the foregoing. Thanking God without gratitude. We see that he is our benefactor, and that he deserves our gratitude. We say this, and feel satisfied with it,—never reflecting that this is a very different thing from actually feeling gratitude.

"For instance, we may rise in the morning, and look out upon the pleasant landscape before us, in the midst of which we are to work during the day, and think of our pleasant home, our friends, and all our comforts and means of happiness, which we are now to enjoy for another day,—the thought of all these things gives us pleasure. We feel a kind of complacency in them, which, connected with our

knowing that they come from God, we mistake for gratitude. We thus often think we are grateful, when the only feeling is *a pleasant recognition of the good enjoyed.* The difference is shown in this, that this latter feeling has no effect upon the conduct, whereas real gratitude will lead us to take pleasure in doing our benefactor's will. Even a painful duty will become a pleasant one, for we always love to make a sacrifice for one who has been kind to us, if we are really grateful to him."

Alonzo here recollected the evening when he took possession of his new home, thinking that he was grateful to God for it, while yet "*he could not*" do that evening what he knew was God's will.

"In a word," continued the pastor, "we mistake the convictions of the understanding, and of the moral sense, for the movements of the heart; whereas, the former may be all right, and the latter all wrong.

"I will tell you now, some of the indications, that a person really in heart dislikes God, even if his understanding is right in respect to his character and his favors.

"1. When his feelings do not go forth spontaneously and pleasantly towards him. Payson once said to his child, 'Have you not sometimes felt, when thinking of some person whom you loved, and who was away from you, as if your heart *went out* to that person, and then it seemed as if the distance between you was lessened, though it was not in reality? On the other hand, when you think of a person whom you do not like, your heart draws back, as it were, and shrinks coldly from him. Now just tell me in which of these ways it is affected when you think of God.'"

Alonzo recollected how readily, when he was at work on the hill side, or in the distant forest, his thoughts and affections would roam away to his wife and his home, and hover

there. He saw too clearly, also, that his heart never thus sought God.

"Another evidence of our disliking God, is, when we escape from his presence as soon as we can. When we cut short our prayers, and our thoughts come back with a spring to our business or our pleasures, as if we had kept them on God for a few minutes, by force;—when the Sabbath is a weariness, and secret communion with him a burden."

Alonzo felt that the pastor was describing his feelings, exactly.

"3. Also when we hold back a little from cordial acquiescence in God's justice, and in his fearful decision in punishing sin, both as exhibited in his daily dealings of mankind, and in the Bible. We shrink from some things in his administration, just as one condemned malefactor is shocked at what he calls the cruelty of the government in executing another.

"Now do you, when examined by these tests, love God, or dislike him?"

It was plain from the appearance of the assembly, that they felt condemned. The pastor perceived that they pleaded guilty. He closed his remarks by these words,

"You *ought* to love God. He commands you to do it. You ought to have loved him all your lives;—you ought to love him now. He will forgive all the past for his Son's sake, if you will now simply turn your hearts to him. Ought you not to do it?"

"I will do it," thought Alonzo, as they kneeled once more, to offer their parting prayer. The pastor uttered

expressions of penitence, gratitude, affection, but Alonzo perceived that notwithstanding his determination, *his* heart did not follow. The more he tried to force himself to love God, the more clearly he perceived the distinctions which the pastor had been drawing, and the more painfully evident it was to him, that he had no heart to love God. He rose from his knees with a thought,—half impatience and half despair,—"I do not love him, and I *cannot* love him. What shall I do?"

For many weeks, Alonzo was much discouraged and distressed. He saw more and more clearly, that he did not love God, and that he never had loved him. Conscience upbraided him and he had little peace. Yet he would not come and yield his heart to his Maker. He thought he wished to do it,—as if it were possible for a person to *wish to love*, without loving. He struggled,—but struggling did no good. What God commands us to do, is to love him, not to struggle against our hatred of him. He set a double watch over his conduct; he was more regular in his prayers, more attentive to the Scriptures, and to every means of instruction. But all seemed to do no good. His heart was still alienated from God, and it seemed to him to become alienated more and more

There were three great difficulties which he experienced and which perplexed and troubled him exceedingly.

First, it really seemed to him that he could not change his heart; he *could* not force himself to love God and repent of sin. He also could not help the wrong and wicked feelings which often raged within him, on occasions of peculiar temptation. I am aware that the theological philosophers disagree on this subject, but it really seemed to Alonzo, that his wicked heart was too strong for him. This thought, however, did not make him easy. Conscience upbraided him the more, for being in such a state of heart towards God.

Secondly, the more he thought of the subject, and the

more he tried to make himself fit for heaven, the more hollow and superficial and hypocritical he found all his supposed goodness to be. The law of God claiming his heart, had come home to his apprehension, and brought a new standard before him. His supposed gratitude and penitence, his prayers, and all the virtues on which he had prided himself, resolved themselves into elements of corruption and sin, under the powerful analysis of the Spirit.

Thirdly, in trying to correct his sinful habits, his progress in discovering his sins went on far in advance of his success in purifying himself from them, so that in his attempts to reform his heart, he was continually alarmed at new and unexpected exposures. In fact the law of God had come home to him, and as oil upon the fresh surface of a variegated wood, brings out the dark stains which had before been invisible, it developed corruptions and sins in his heart, which he had never supposed to be slumbering there. He was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, SIN REVIVED and he died;—his heart sunk within him, to see his sad spiritual condition. In a word, Alonzo opened his eyes to the fact that the excellences of character which circumstances had produced in him, were external, and superficial, and that he was in heart, and that he always had been, the enemy of God, and the miserable, helpless slave of sin.

Though he was thus, in some degree, aware of the condition of his heart, yet that condition was not altered. The trouble with him was, that he still disliked God, and loved the world and sin, but conscience pressed him with the guilt of it, and he feared a judgment to come. Instead however, of throwing himself fully upon God and giving him his heart, he still kept away, alienated and miserable. He had certain excuses with which he unconsciously deceived himself, and was gradually lulling his conscience to rest, when one day he had a private interview with his pastor, in which he presented his excuses, and they were

answered. These excuses, and the replies made by the pastor to them, were, in substance, somewhat as follows.

"I do feel, sir, that I am a most miserable sinner, but I do not know what to do. I have been now seeking religion for many years, and the more I seek it, the farther I seem to be from it."

"What more then, can you do?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Then why does not your heart rest quietly in the consciousness of having been faithful to the utmost in duty? God requires no more."

Alonzo hung his head. He perceived the absurdity of his excuse.

"No," said his pastor; "You show by that remark, how easily and completely the heart deceives itself. Upbraided as you are by conscience, for guilt in disliking and disobeying God,—reproached so severely and continually too, that you cannot rest, you yet say to me that which implies that you have done and are doing all which God requires."

Alonzo sighed; it was too true.

"I know it," said he; "It is just so. I continually find some new proof of the corruption and deceitfulness of my heart. I want to change it, but it seems to me that I cannot."

"You speak as if your heart were one party, and you another, and as if you were right, and all the blame rested upon your heart, as an enemy that had insinuated itself by some means into your bosom. Now what is your heart?—why it is simply yourself;—your moral character and moral feelings.* To talk of a contention between yourself and your heart, is a complete absurdity, for the parties in the contest are one and the self-same thing. The struggle, if there is any, is between the claims of God's law, urged by his Spirit, on the one side, and you or your heart resisting

* Payson.

on the other. He commands you to give him your heart, that is *yourself*,—your affections, your love, and you do not do it."

"I know it, but it seems to me that I cannot help it. I am conscious that my affections are not given to God,—they will cling to the world and sin, and I cannot help it."

"The feelings however, which you cannot help, you admit to be wrong feelings."

"Yes sir, I feel and know they are wrong, and that is what makes me miserable."

"Then you are more guilty than I supposed. What should you say, if you knew of a man who said he had such an uncontrollable desire to steal, or to kill, that he could not help continually committing these crimes? Should you think him worse or better than those who sinned occasionally under strong temptation?"

"But I struggle against the feelings, and cannot conquer them."

"And suppose such a man as I have described, should meet you in a lonely place, and should tell you that he must rob and murder you,—that he had been struggling against the disposition, but it was too strong for him. What would you think of him? Why plainly, that he was a man of extraordinary depravity. The greater the struggle, the greater the evidence of the wickedness which could not be overcome. Our duty is to feel right towards God, not to struggle with wrong feelings."

"I feel that that is true. But what to do, I do not know. It does seem to me that I want to repent of sin and forsake it, but—but—"

"But you do not, and therefore it is impossible that you should want to. There is no force applied to you, to continue you in sin. If there was, your conduct would not be sin. To wish to repent, without repenting, is as impossible and absurd, as to wish to be sorry for something for which you are really glad. I have no doubt you

really think you wish to repent, but I think you deceive yourself. What you wish for, is some *of the results which you suppose would follow* from repentance. This is what the desires of your mind rest upon; but repentance itself looks disagreeable and repulsive, and as you cannot gain those results in any other way, you are troubled and distressed."

Alonzo saw at once by a glance within, that this was true. He longed for peace of mind, relief from the reproaches of conscience,—the reputation and the standing of a Christian here, and assurance of safety and happiness hereafter; but he perceived that he did not long for penitence itself. It was a disagreeable means of obtaining a desirable end. He was silent for a few moments, and then he said, with a sigh,

"Oh, how I wish I could begin life anew. I would live in a very different manner from what I have done."

"That remark shows how little you know, after all, of your own character, and of the way of salvation. It is not by purifying ourselves, and thus making ourselves fit for heaven,—or by any such ideas as should suggest the plan of beginning life anew. If you should begin, you would undoubtedly be again as you have been."

Alonzo saw that this was true. He was ashamed that he had expressed such a wish, and at length asked, in a sorrowful desponding tone, whether his pastor could say nothing to aid or guide him.

"I do not know that I can," was the reply. "The difficulty is not the want of knowledge of duty, but the want of a heart to do it. If you had the right desires, your difficulties would all be over in a moment, but as you have not, I cannot impart them. Since you are thus bent on sin, God alone can change you.

"I will ask you, however, one question. Do you clearly understand what this verse means, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish

their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.'"

"No sir, I have never thought of it particularly."

"You feel in some degree the hopelessness of your condition, if God should leave you to yourself. You have been neglecting your highest duty all your days, and in your efforts to seek religion, you have been endeavoring to set yourself right, with an idea of thus recommending yourself to God's favor. You have been discouraged and disheartened by this hopeless labor, for the farther you proceed in your efforts to repair your character, the more deep and extended do you find the proofs of its inherent corruption and depravity.

"You are like the man attempting to repair a house gone thoroughly to decay," continued the pastor, and as he said these words, he took down from a little set of shelves behind him, a small volume, from which he read the following passage.

"'The sinner going about to establish a righteousness of his own, is like a man endeavoring to repair his house, which had thoroughly gone to decay When he begins, there is a tolerably fair exterior. It appears as if a few nails to tighten what is loose,—a little new flooring,—and here and there a fresh sill, will render all snug again; and that by means of these, together with paint and paper and white-wash, to give the proper superficial decoration, all will be well,—or at least, that his building will be as good as his neighbor's. When he begins, however, he finds that there is a little more to be done than he had expected. The first board that he removes in order to replace it by a better, reveals one in a worse condition behind it. He drives a nail to tighten a clapboard, and it slumps into decayed wood behind, taking no hold; he takes away more, by little and little, hoping at every removal, to come to the

end of what is unsound; but he finds that the more he does, the more disheartened and discouraged he feels, for his progress in learning the extent of the decay, keeps far in advance of his progress in repairing it, until at last, he finds to his consternation, that every beam is gone,—every rafter worm-eaten and decayed, the posts pulverized by the dry rot, and the foundations cracked and tottering. There is no point to start from, in making his repairs, no foundation to build upon. The restoration of the edifice to strength and beauty, can never be accomplished, and if it could, the expense would far exceed his pecuniary power. His building only looks the worse for his having broken its superficial continuity. He has but revealed the corruption which he never can remove or repair.'

"Now does not this correspond with your efforts and disappointments during the last few months?"

"Exactly," said Alonzo.

"And your case is hopeless if God leaves you to yourself. *You cannot be saved.* It is not that you cannot come and be the child of God if you wish to, but you cannot come, *because you do not wish to.*

"Now this being your condition, you need a Savior. There is one for you. If you wish, you can come and unite yourself with him. If you do, through his sufferings and death you may be freely forgiven. The responsibility, the liability, so to speak, for the past will be cut off. The Savior assumes all that burden and you may go free. By coming and giving yourself up wholly to him, you bring your past life as it were to a close, and begin a new spiritual life, which comes from union with him. The burden of past guilt is like a heavy chain, which you have been dragging along, until it is too heavy to be borne any longer. Union with Christ sunders it at a blow, and you go forward free and happy, forgiven for all the past, and for the future enjoying a new spiritual life, which you will draw

from him. In a word, *you abandon your own character*, with the feelings with which a man would abandon a wreck, and take refuge with Jesus Christ who will receive you, and procure for you forgiveness for the past, and strength for the future, by means of his own righteousness and sufferings."

Alonzo had heard the way of salvation by Christ explained a thousand times before, but it always seemed a mysticism to him, as it always does to those who have never seen their sins and felt the utter hopelessness of their moral condition. As long as man is deceived about his true character, he needs no Savior. But when he detects himself,—when his eyes are opened, and his deep seated corruptions are exposed,—when he feels the chains of sin holding him with a relentless gripe in hopeless bondage,—then he finds that utter self-abandonment and flying for refuge to union with a Savior crucified for his sins—making thus as it were, common cause with a divine Redeemer whose past sufferings may be of avail to ransom him, and who will supply new spiritual life to guide him in future,—he finds this prospect opens to him a refuge just such as he needs.

As Alonzo walked home from this interview, his heart dwelt with delight on the love of Christ to men, in thus making arrangements for taking lost sinners into such an union with him. His heart was full. There was no *struggling* to feel this love and gratitude. It was the warm, spontaneous movement of his soul, which no struggling could have suppressed. He longed for an occasion to do something to evince his gratitude. It was evening, and he looked forward with delight to the opportunity of calling together his family to establish family prayers. He almost wished that the exercise was twice as embarrassing as it was, for it seemed to him that an opportunity to suffer some real pain or sacrifice, in the cause of his Savior, would be a high enjoyment to him, as a gratification of the new feelings of love which burned within him.

As he walked along, his heart clung, as it were, to the Savior, with a feeling of quiet happiness. In former days, he *thought* he loved him, deceived, as we have already shown,—now he *knew* he loved him. He saw "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," and the Savior whom he there saw was all in all.

When he opened his bible, old familiar passages, which had always seemed to him mystical and unintelligible, shone with new meaning

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God by our Lord Jesus Christ." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live,—but the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Alonzo made greater efforts to do his duty after this, than he did before, but it was for a different object and in a different way. Then, he was trying to establish his own righteousness, so as to fit himself for heaven. He abandoned this altogether now, having hope only in Christ,—undeserved mercy in Christ. He however made great efforts to grow in grace and do good to others,—but it was now simply because he loved to do it. Then he made these efforts as an unpleasant but a supposed necessary means to a desired end. Now he hoped to secure that end in another way, and he made these efforts, because they were delightful on their own account. He was, in fact, a *new creature;* a "NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS;"—changed not by his vain efforts to establish his own righteousness, but by the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, altering fundamentally the desires and affections of his inmost soul.

Reader!—in going forward through this volume, which will explain to you the way to do good, if your aim is secretly or openly to *fit yourself*, by your good deeds, for the

approbation of God, and *thus* to procure the pardon of your sins,—the farther you go, and the greater the effort you make, the more discouraged and disheartened you will be. For your progress in discovering the corruption and depravity of your heart, will keep far in advance of your success in correcting or repairing it. The hopeless task may as well be abandoned in the beginning as at the end. Come first to the Savior. Give up yourself, your character,—and all the hopes you may have founded upon it. Unite yourself with Christ as *the branch is united to the vine*, that is, so as to be sustained by *one common vitality*. This will of course be a new life to you, a spiritual life, without which all excellence is superficial, all hopes of eternal happiness baseless, and all real peace and enjoyment unknown.

CHAPTER II.

MOTIVES.

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

THE last chapter was intended to show the reader that the impulse which should lead us to the performance of good works in this world of probation, is not a hope of thereby fitting ourselves by meritorious performances, for God's service in heaven; but a spontaneous love for God and man, urging us forward in such a course, while our hope of forgiveness for sin rests on other grounds altogether. We have some other considerations in respect to the motives which ought to influence us in doing good, which we shall present in this chapter.

By engaging in the work of doing good to others, we do not by any means sacrifice our own happiness. We often indeed, give up some of the ordinary *means* of enjoyment, but we do not sacrifice the *end*. We secure our own richest, purest enjoyment, though in a new and better way.

We change the character of our happiness too; for the pleasure which results from carrying happiness to the hearts of others is very different in its nature from that which we secure by aiming directly at our own. Now the reader ought to consider these things, and understand distinctly at the outset, whether he is in such a state of mind and heart that he wishes to pursue the happiness of others, or whether, on the other hand, he means to confine his efforts to the promotion of his own.

On some cold winter evening, perhaps, you return from the business of the day to your home, and I will suppose that you have there the comforts of life all around you. You draw up your richly stuffed elbow chair by the side of the glowing fire which beams and brightens upon the scene of elegance which your parlor exhibits. A new and entertaining book is in your hand, and fruits and refreshments are by your side upon the table. Here you may sit hour after hour, enjoying these means of comfort and happiness, carried away perhaps by the magic of the pen to distant and different scenes, from which you return now and then to listen a moment to the roaring of the wintry wind, or the beating of the snow upon your windows. If you have a quiet conscience, you may find much happiness in such a scene, especially if gratitude to God as the bestower of such comforts, and as your kind Protector and Friend, warms your heart and quickens your sensibilities. Here you may sit hour after hour, until Orion has made his steady way through the clouds and storms of the sky, high into the heavens.

But still though this might be enjoyment, there is another way of spending an hour of the evening which would also afford enjoyment, though of a different kind. You lay aside your book,—trundle back your cushioned chair,—pack your fruit and refreshments in a small basket,—take down from your secretary a little favorite volume of hymns, and then muffling youself as warmly as possible in cap and wrapper, you sally forth in the midst of the storm.

The brick sidewalk is half concealed by the drifts of the snow, among which you make your slippery way, until you turn down into a narrow court, guiding your steps to one of its humble houses. You enter by a low door. It is not, however, the abode of poverty. There is comfort and plenty under this roof;—on a different scale indeed, from that which you have left at home, though perhaps not at all inferior in respect to the actual enjoyment they afford.

The mother who welcomes you is a widow, and the daily labor of her hands procure for her all that is necessary for her wants, and much besides which she enjoys highly as luxuries. She enjoys them more highly, perhaps, than you do the costly splendors you have left. Her bright brass lamps, which she toiled several days to earn, and the plain rocking chair in the corner, are, to her, as much, and perhaps far more, than your tall astral, crowned with its cut glass shade, or your splendid ottoman.

In a word, all the wants of this family are well supplied, so that I am not going to introduce the reader to a scene of pecuniary charity, as he may perhaps have supposed You must bring something more valuable than money here, if you wish to do good. You *have* something more valuable than money—Christian sympathy; this I will suppose you to bring.

On one side of the fire is a cradle which the mother has been rocking. You take your seat in a low chair by the side of it, and leaning over it, you look upon the pale face of a little sufferer who has been for many months languishing there. His disease has curved his back, and brought his head over towards his breast, and contracted his lungs, and he lies there in bonds which death only can sunder. Something like a smile lights up his features to see that his friend has come again to see him even through the storm. That smile and its meaning will repay you for all the cold blasts which you encountered on your way to the sick room. After a few minutes conversation with the boy, you ask if he would like to have you walk with him a little.

He reaches up his arms to you, evidently pleased with the proposal, and you lift him from his pillow;—and you enjoy, yourself, more, even than he does, the relief he experiences in extending his limbs, cramped by the narrow dimensions of his cradle.

You raise him in your arms. He is not heavy. Disease has diminished his weight, and you walk to and fro across the room with a gentle step,—his head reclining upon your shoulder. The uneasy, restless expression which was upon his countenance is gradually changed for one of peaceful repose; until, at length, lulled by the gentle sound of your voice, he drops into a quiet slumber. You may walk with him many, many times across the floor, before fatigue will counterbalance the pleasure you will receive, in watching his placid and happy look reflected in the glass behind you, when you turn.

At last he wakes, and you gently lay him down into his cradle again. You read him a hymn expressive of resignation to God, and confidence in his kind protection. Kneeling down by his cradle and holding his hand in yours, you offer a simple prayer in his behalf, and when at length you rise to go away, you see in his countenance and feel in the spontaneous pressure of his little hand, that though he says nothing, for he has not yet learned the cold forms of civility,—his heart is full of happiness and gratitude. In witnessing it, and in recalling the scene to your mind in your cold and stormy walk home, you will experience an enjoyment which I cannot describe, but which all who have experienced it will understand. This enjoyment is, however, very different in its nature from the solitary happiness you would have felt at your own fireside. Which kind, now, do you prefer?

The case I have described is, it is true, an experiment on a very small scale. The good done, was very little,—it was only half an hour's partial relief for a sick child, and another half hour's happiness for him, afterwards, as he lies

in silence and solitude in his cradle, musing on the kindness of his visitor. This is indeed doing good on a small scale, but then on the other hand it is making but a small effort. It shows the better, perhaps, on account of its being so simple a case, the point to be illustrated, viz. that you may take two totally different modes to make a winter evening pass pleasantly; and it is not merely a difference of means when the end is the same, but a difference in the very end and object itself.

"But is not the end sought in both cases our own happiness?" you ask.

"No, it is not. And this leads me to a distinction,—a metaphysical distinction, which every one who wishes to do good on the right principles ought to understand. The distinction is contained summarily in the following propositions, and I wish my young reader would pause and reflect upon them, until their meaning is distinctly understood, and then he will be prepared to enter into the spirit of the remarks which follow. The propositions are elementary,—the very foundations of the science of doing good.

1. One may do good for the sake of the *credit* or the *advantage* of it; in which case it is a matter of policy.

2. He may do good for the sake of the *pleasure* of it. Here it is a matter of feeling.

3. He may do good simply for the sake of obeying God, and from the desire to have the good done. In this case it is a matter of *principle*.

1. A man may do good for the sake of the *credit* of it; and this *is* the secret of a far greater proportion of the apparently benevolent effort which is made in the world, than is generally supposed. I do not by any means say that it is wrong for a man to desire the good opinion of others, and especially to wish to be known as a man of kind feeling for the wants and sufferings of others, his fellow men. This is probably right. The degree, the extent, to which this operates upon us as a stimulus to effort, is the main point

Various motives: perhaps not wholly wrong.

There are various ways in which this principle may operate. You may go and visit the sick, and carry comforts to the poor, and be very active and bustling in your efforts to gather Sabbath-school scholars, or to distribute tracts, or collect contributions for charitable purposes,—and you pass along from month to month, imagining that your motives and feelings are all right. And yet if you were at any time to pause and reflect, and call your heart thoroughly to account, you would find that your real stimulus is the wish to be esteemed by all your Christian acquaintances, as an ardent and a devoted Christian, or an active, efficient, successful member or manager of a charitable society. Or you may contribute money,—alas! how much is so contributed, — because you know it will be expected of you. The box or the paper comes round, and you cannot easily escape it. You do the good, not for the sake of having the good done, but to save your own credit. Or, to take another case still, on a larger scale, and more gross in its nature,—you may, if a man of business and wealth, take a large share in some costly, benevolent enterprise, with the design of enlarging your influence or extending your business by the effect which your share in the transaction will produce upon the minds of others. It is true that this feeling would not be unmixed. You would look, and *try to look*, as much as possible at the benevolent object to be accomplished,—and a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, will attempt to persuade you that this is your sole, or at least your principal desire. But, if in such a case, you were suddenly laid upon a dying bed, and could look upon the transaction in the bright spiritual light which the vicinity of another world throws upon all human actions and pursuits, you would see that in all these cases, you are doing good, not for the sake of pleasing God by doing his work, — but to promote, in various ways, your own private ends.

Let it be understood that we do not say that this would

Sentimental feeling. Illustration.

be wrong—nor do we say it would be right. We say nothing about it. How far, and into what fields a just and proper policy, will lead a man, in the transaction of his worldly affairs, it is not now our business to inquire. The subject we are considering is not policy, but benevolence;—and the only point which we wish here to carry, is inducing the young Christian, in commencing his course of religious action, to *discriminate*,—to understand distinctly what is benevolence and what is not;—to have his mental and moral powers so disciplined, that when he really is doing good for the sake of the credit of it, he may distinctly know it.

2. Doing good from the impulse of sentimental *feeling*, is regarded among men as of a higher moral rank, than doing good from policy. Though after all, it might perhaps be a little difficult to assign a substantial reason for the distinction. One of the lowest examples of doing good from mere feeling, is where we make effort to relieve pain, because we cannot bear to see it. A wretched looking child, with bare feet and half naked bosom, comes to our door in a cold inclement season of the year. He comes, it may be, to beg for food or clothing. We should perhaps never have thought of making any search in our neighborhood for objects of suffering, but when such an object obtrudes itself upon us, we cannot bear to send him away with a denial. We give him food or clothing, or perhaps money; but our chief inducement for doing it is to relieve a feeling of uneasiness in our own minds. We do not say that *this* is wrong. All we say is, that it is not acting from *principle*. It may be considered a moral excellence that the mind is so constituted in respect to its powers and sympathy with others, that it cannot be happy itself while an object of misery is near, and the happiness of knowing that all around us are happy, may be a kind of enjoyment which it is very proper for us to seek. But still this is doing good from feeling, not from principle.

Another case.	Principle.	Nature of it.

Feeling will often prompt a benevolent man to make efforts to promote positive enjoyment, as well as to relieve mere suffering which forces itself upon the notice. You "get interested," as the phrase is, in some unhappy widow, perhaps, and her children, — a case of destitution and suffering, with which you have become casually acquainted. The circumstances of her case are such, perhaps, as at first to make a strong appeal to your feelings, and after beginning to act in her behalf, you are led on from step to step by the pleasure of doing good, till you have found her regular employment, and relieved all her wants, and provided for the comfort and proper education of her children. All this may be right, but it may be simply *feeling*, which has prompted it. There may have been no steady principle of benevolence through the whole.

3. Doing good from *principle*. There is a far wider difference between the benevolence of principle, and the benevolence of feeling, than young Christians who have not fully considered the subject are aware of. Principle looks first to God. She sees him engaged in the work of promoting universal holiness and happiness. Not universal holiness, merely as *a means* of happiness, but holiness *and* happiness;—for moral excellence is in itself a good, independently of any enjoyment which may result from it. So that Principle has two distinct and independent, though closely connected objects, while Feeling has but one. Principle decides deliberately to take hold *as a cooperator with God*, in promoting the prosperity of his kingdom;—which kingdom is the prevalence of perfect holiness and universal enjoyment. She does not then rush heedlessly into the field and seize hold of the first little object which comes in her way. She acts upon a plan. She surveys the field. She considers what means and resources she now has, and what she may, by proper effort, bring within her reach; and then aims at acting in such a manner as shall in the end promote, in the highest and best way, the

designs of God. She feels too, that in these labors she is not alone. She is not a principal. She is endeavoring to execute the plans of a superior, and she endeavors to act, not as her own impulses might prompt, but as the nature and character of his great designs require.

Doing good from motives of *policy*, the first of the inducements we have considered, is not likely to find much favor with human hearts, if it can be simply deprived of its disguise. But the distinction between feeling and principle demands more careful attention. The two may sometimes cooperate. In fact, they do very well together, but Feeling cannot be trusted alone with the work of benevolence. She will aid, she will inspirit Principle, and enable her to do her work better and more pleasantly, but she cannot be trusted alone.

We can, perhaps, more clearly show the distinction between the benevolence of Principle and of Feeling, by an allegorical illustration. Let us suppose then, that one evening, Feeling and Principle were walking in a road, upon the outskirts of a country town. They had been to attend an evening service in a school-house, half a mile from their homes. It was a cold winter evening, and as they passed by the door of a small cabin with boarded windows and broken roof, they saw a child sitting at the door, weeping and sobbing bitterly.

Feeling looked anxious and concerned.

"What is the matter, my little fellow?" said Principle, with a pleasant countenance.

The boy sobbed on.

"What a house," said Feeling, "for human beings to live in. But I do not think any thing serious is the matter. Let us go on."

"What is the matter, my boy?" said Principle again, kindly. "Can you not tell us what is the matter?"

"My father is sick," said the boy, and I don't know what is the matter with him."

"Hark," said Feeling.

They listened and heard the sounds of moaning and muttering within the house.

"Let us go on," said Feeling, pulling upon Principle's arm, "and we will send somebody to see what is the matter."

"We had better go and see ourselves," said Principle to her companion.

Feeling shrunk back from the proposal, and Principle herself, with female timidity, paused a moment, from an undefined sense of danger.

"There can be no real danger," thought she. "Besides, if there is, my Savior exposed himself to danger in doing good. Why should not I? Savior," she whispered, "aid and guide me."

"Where is your mother, my boy," said she.

"She is in there," said the boy, "trying to take care of him."

"Oh, come," said Feeling, "let us go. Here, my boy, here is some money for you to carry to your mother. Saying this, she tossed down some change by his side. The boy was wiping his eyes, and did not notice it. He looked up anxiously into Principle's face and said,

"I wish you would go and see my mother."

Principle advanced towards the door, and Feeling, afraid to stay out, or to go home alone, followed.

They walked in. Lying upon a bed of straw, and covered with miserable and tattered blankets, was a sick man, moaning and muttering and snatching at the bed clothes with his fingers. He was evidently not sane.

His wife was sitting on the end of a bench, by the chimney corner, with her elbows on her knees, and her face upon her hands. As her visiters entered, she looked up to them, the very picture of wretchedness and despair. Principle was glad, but Feeling was sorry they had come.

Feeling began to talk to some small children, who were

shivering over the embers upon the hearth, and Principle accosted the mother. They both learned soon, the true state of the case. It was a case of common misery, resulting from the common cause. Feeling was overwhelmed with painful emotion at witnessing such suffering. Principle began to think what could be done to relieve it, and to prevent its return.

"Let us give her some money to send and buy some wood, and some bread," whispered Feeling, "and go away; I cannot bear to stay."

"She wants kind words and sympathy, more than food and fuel, for present relief," said Principle, "let us sit with her a little while."

The poor sufferer was cheered and encouraged by their presence. A little hope broke in. Her strength revived under the influence of a cordial more powerful than any medicated beverage; and when, after half an hour, they went away promising future relief, the spirits and strength of the wretched wife and mother had been a little restored. She had smoothed her husband's wretched couch, and quieted her crying children, and shut her doors, and was preparing to enjoy the relief when it should come. In a word, she had been revived from the stupor of despair. As they walked away, Feeling said, it was a most heart-rending scene, and that she should not forget it as long as she lived. Principle said nothing, but guided their way to a house where they found one whom they could employ to carry food and fuel to the cabin, and take care of the sick man, while the wife and her children should sleep. They then returned home. Feeling retired to rest, shuddering lest the terrible scene should haunt her in her dreams, and saying that she would not witness such a scene again, for all the world. Principle kneeled down at her bedside with a mind at peace. She commended the sufferers to God's care, and prayed that her Savior would give her *every day* some such work to do for him.

Feeling unsteady; fickle; inconsiderate.

Such, in a very simple case, is the difference between Feeling and Principle. The one obeys God. The other obeys her own impulses, and relieves misery because she cannot bear to see it. As a consequence of this difference in the very nature of their benevolence, many results follow in respect to the character of their efforts.

1. Feeling is unsteady. Acting from impulse merely, it is plain that she will not act excepting when circumstances occur to awaken the impulse. She therefore cannot be depended upon. Her stimulus is from without. It arises from external objects acting upon her, and consequently her benevolence rises and falls as external circumstances vary. The stimulus of Principle is from within. It is a heart reconciled to God, and consequently united to him, and desiring to carry forward his plans. Consequently when there is no work actually before her, she goes forth of her own accord and seeks work. She is consequently *steady*.

2. Feeling will not persevere. When she sees suffering, she feels uneasy, and to remove this uneasiness, she makes benevolent effort. But there are two ways of removing it. She will cease to feel uneasiness not only when the suffering is relieved, but also when she becomes accustomed to witnessing it. She feeds a starving child, not because she wishes the child to be happy, but because she cannot bear to see him wretched. Now, as soon as she becomes accustomed to seeing wretchedness, she can bear it easily enough; and therefore she cannot go on with any long course of benevolent effort. For before long she becomes accustomed to the suffering,—it ceases to affect her,—and her whole impulse, which is her whole motive, is gone.

3. Feeling is inconsiderate. What she wishes is not to do good, but to relieve her own wounded sensibilities. She will give a wretched object money at the door, though she might know that he uses money principally as the means of procuring that which is the chief cause of his

wretchedness. That is, however, of no consequence to her, for the new misery she makes will be out of her sight, and her purpose is answered equally well, whether the misery is relieved, or only removed from view. Therefore, she is inconsiderate,—acting with good intentions,—but often increasing the evil she intended to remedy.

4. Feeling aims only at relieving palpable wretchedness. She might, indeed, if she was wise, aim at promoting general happiness on an enlarged plan; for her own enjoyment would be most highly promoted by this. But she is not generally very wise; and while Principle forms plans, and makes systematic efforts to promote the general enjoyment, Feeling continues in a state of moral inaction in respect to the work of doing good, unless there is some specific and palpable suffering to be relieved.

5. And once more, Feeling does not aim at promoting holiness or diminishing sin, on their own account. Principle considers sin an evil, and holiness or moral excellence, a good, *in themselves*, on their own account, and independently of their connection with enjoyment and suffering. She would rather have all men grateful, and obedient to God, and united to one another, even if they were to gain nothing by it in respect to happiness. Feeling does not take this view of the subject. Nothing affects her but the sight or the tale of wo. If you can show her that sin is the cause of some suffering which she is endeavoring to relieve, she will perhaps take an interest in endeavoring to remove it, as a means to the accomplishment of an end; but in respect to the universal reign of love to God and love to man, on account of the intrinsic excellence of love, she feels no interest. She does not perceive this moral excellence. She may be herself entirely destitute of this love.

In all these respects, and in many more, analogous to them, Principle is very different from Feeling.

1. She is steady and persevering. She has in mind, one great object, the universal establishment of the kingdom

of God. This is what she lives for, and she is steadily pressing on in the accomplishment of her work. When she attempts to do good in any particular case, it is not to relieve herself from pained sensibilities, but to promote the great cause; and when, accordingly, the acuteness of her feelings have been blunted by time and use, she goes on more vigorously and with more energy,—not less. Her impulse is from within. It is a deliberate, a fixed and a settled desire to please God, to cooperate in his plans, and to promote human happiness. This is a steady principle which leads her to *seek* work,—not merely to do what is obtruded upon her.

2. Principle acts upon a plan. She makes it a part of her business to look all around her, and see in what ways and how extensively she can have any influence on the character and happiness of human beings. Then she considers what objects ought to be aimed at, and what is their comparative value, and how long life may be expected to endure. With all these elements in view, she forms wise and systematic plans, extending as far as her influence can be made to extend. In a word, she feels that she has a great work to do, and she endeavors to make arrangements for doing it systematically and thoroughly.

3. Principle aims, too, as I have before intimated, at promoting goodness as well as happiness. She looks upon men as moral beings, not merely sentient beings, and aims at promoting their moral excellence as well as their enjoyment. In fact, the former attracts far the greater portion of her regard, for it is not only a good in itself, but it is the only sure foundation of happiness.

4. And once more, Principle engages in her work as a child of God, and a cooperator with him. She feels at all times, therefore, a sense of filial dependence. She puts forth her hand to be led, and goes wherever her Master calls. She reports regularly to him, too, acting solely as his obedient and dutiful child.

The reader will thus, I hope, clearly understand the distinction between policy, feeling, and principle, as stimulus to effort in doing good. The inquiry will naturally arise, —at least it ought to arise with each one, what is the character of his own benevolent effort. We shall all find that these motives are mixed in our hearts, and by a careful self-examination, we shall probably perceive that policy has more influence than either of the others. I do not mean by policy, a deliberate intention to pretend to be benevolent for the purpose of accomplishing a sinister design; I mean, doing good, with some real interest in it, but where the paramount inducement, after all, is the light in which the affair will be viewed by others. This may not be always wrong, as we have before remarked. A man ought not to be indifferent entirely to his own reputation The favorable regard of the wise and good, every one should desire, and it is right to take pleasure in the sense of its possession; but there are probably very few who would not be surprised, if they were to see their good deeds honestly analyzed, to find how large a portion of the inducement in nearly all of them, was to be seen of men. To discriminate between the benevolence of feeling and that of principle, requires still greater care. The distinction is not exactly one between right and wrong, for to be influenced by feeling, in our efforts, is certainly not wrong. We ought to feel deep compassion for the sufferings of others, and a great personal pleasure in the work of alleviating them. But *principle* ought to be the great basis of all our efforts at doing good. It is the only stable basis,— and it is the only one which in any degree enables us to fulfil our obligations as the creatures of God. Doing good on principle, is the only kind of benevolence which is pleasing to him.

If we wish to know which of these motives control us, we must pause when we are about to make some effort to do good, and allow our thoughts to go freely forward, and

The way to test the real motives.

see what is the object on which they will rest, as the end to be secured. When, for example, you are making efforts to prepare yourself well, for duties as teacher of a class in the Sunday school, what is it, that your heart rests upon as the object you are pursuing in it? Your imagination goes forward, beyond your present preparation; now follow her; see where she goes; what picture does she form? Does she exhibit to your eye, the beautiful appearance of a full and an attentive class, to be noticed by the other teachers, or the superintendent, or by some individual friend, whose good opinion you particularly desire? Does she whisper to you the praises of your fidelity, and your success, or does she warn you of the reproof, or the censure, secret or open, which you must expect if you are unfaithful? Or does she on the other hand, lead you to the hearts of the children, and show you renewed, sanctified affections there? Does she picture to you their future lives, purified from sin, and lead you to anticipate through them, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom?

So when a friend calls upon you, to ask your subscription to a charity,—to relieve distress, for example,—and you sit listening to the story, and determine to add your name to the list,—what is it that your imagination reposes upon at the instant of decision? The satisfaction of the applicant at finding you ready to aid, or the sight of your name by those to whom the paper is to be borne, or relief from the pain awakened by the sad details of the story? Or, is it the pleasure of obeying God, and aiding in doing his work? What is it in such cases, that your mind rests upon at the moment of decision? Recall a few such cases to mind, and give the reins to your heart, and see where it will go. If you take off all restraint, and let it move freely, it will run to its own end, and there repose itself upon the object it is really seeking.

So far as principle may control you in your efforts to do good, it will tend to identify you in heart and feeling, and in

plans, with God, and lead you to act in imitation of his example, and as a laborer by his side. Let us look then, at the benevolence of the Deity, for this is the benevolence which you are to cherish. This you are to imitate,—to cooperate with. You cannot, therefore, study it too closely. Let us devote, then, the remaining paragraphs of the chapter, to a particular consideration of the character which the benevolence of the Deity assumes.

1. It would seem to be the great plan and the great employment of the Deity, to fill the universe with sentient existence, and to provide the whole mighty mass, with the means of happiness in the greatest possible variety. There is, it is true, a vast amount of suffering visible around us, but far the greater portion of it, we can ourselves directly trace to sin, and the bible tells us, that it all comes directly or indirectly from this one poisoned fountain. The arrange ments which God has made, tend all to happiness. It is only our perversions of them, and our violations of his laws, that tend to misery.

Take your stand upon the sea-shore, on a summer morning, and observe *the expression* of the face of nature. It is, as it were, the expression of the countenance of God. Observe the serene sky,—the mild balmy air,—the smooth expanse of water before you, reflecting as in a polished mirror, every rocky crag, and smooth island, and sandy shore, and even every spar and rope of the vessel which seems to sleep upon its bosom. Enveloping you all around, is the thin elastic atmosphere,—balanced in a most delicate equilibrium,—so delicate, that that workman's axe which you see regularly descending upon the wood on that distant point of land, sends a tremulous vibration through the transparent fluid, for a mile all around. Yes, every ripple upon the shore, every song of the locust, even the hum of the distant town sends its own peculiar quivering through the whole, and each brings distinctly and undisturbed to

your ear, its own correct report. At your feet, the clear waters bathe the rocks and pebbles of the shore, and aquatic animals creep over them, or swim in the depths below, enjoying sensations of pleasure which God has carefully provided for every one. He who has a soul capable of understanding it, will sit for hours upon the green bank, at a time like this, receiving an indescribable pleasure from the general expression of such a scene. It is an expression of divine benevolence, beaming from the works of God, which it is strange that human beings can ever fail to understand and love.

How many thousand ingenious contrivances, has God planned and executed to make men happy. The catalogue is endless, of simple pleasures, each distinct from all the rest, which the human being has the opportunity to enjoy. In fact, if man acts on proper principles, and according to the intentions of the Creator, every thing is a source of happiness to him. Employment is pleasant, and rest is pleasant. It is pleasant to begin a new work; it is pleasant to finish one, begun. Morning is delightful,—with its freshness, its animation, its calls and its opportunities for exertion. Evening is delightful too, with its quiet, its stillness, its repose. The summer's sun gladdens the heart,—and so does the refreshing rain, when we see the dry ground drinking it in, as if it enjoyed the extinguishment of its thirst;—and so does the wintry storm, when it howls through the trees, and fills up every road and path, and obscures the window, and spreads over fields, and plains, its mantle of snow. Each comes with its own peculiar voice to the heart, and fills it with peaceful happiness.

All these contrivances are plain and obvious, and yet they are no less contrivances, artfully planned, to increase human enjoyment. There must have been a peculiar and skilful workmanship, in constructing the moral mechanism of the human heart, to secure so many different kinds of happiness, by means of external objects, so numerous, and

The snow.	Running water.	Emotions awakened by them.

so diversified. You can give no reason why the heart of a child is filled with such joyous glee, when the first snow-flakes descend. There is no very special beauty in the sight,—and there is no very well defined hopes of slides or rides, to awaken *such* joy. At fifty, the gladness is not expressed so unequivocally, but yet when the gravest philosopher rides through a wood whose boughs are loaded with the snow, and whose tops bend over with the burden;—and looks upon the footsteps of the rabbit who has leaped along over the ground,—he feels the same pleasure, though he indicates it, by riding on in silent musing, instead of uttering exclamations of delight. Can you explain this pleasure? Is there any *describable* pleasure in a great expanse of white? Is the form of the trees, or the beauty of its foliage improved by the snowy mantle? No. The explanation is that God, who formed the laws of nature, formed also the human heart, and has so adapted the one to the other, as to promote in every variety of mode, the enjoyment of the beings he has made. There is no end to the kinds of enjoyment, which God has thus opened to us every where They are too numerous to be named, and no intellectual philosopher has ever undertaken the hopeless task of arranging them. Who,—to name one other example,—who, when walking on the banks of a brook, at a time when business or cares did not press him on, has not stopped to gaze a moment upon the running water, as it rippled over the smooth yellow sands. That quivering picture on the retina of the eye gives delight, and the passing traveller is arrested and stands still, and keeps his eye fixed upon the spot, that the retina may enjoy it. And who can define, or explain, or classify, or name the pleasant feeling? There is but one explanation. God, delighting in contrivances for promoting enjoyment, has formed the brook, the retina, and the feeling heart affected by it, in such a way that enjoyment shall be developed, when they come into combination. It is so, as I have said, in a thousand other cases, and man,

if he would keep his heart free from moral pollutions which destroy peace, and disturb and poison every source of happiness, would find all nature continually communicating to him, through one sense and another, feelings of pure and rational happiness.

Still all this is happiness of the lowest kind. It is true, indeed, that these feelings may be so mingled and combined with the higher moral feelings, as to partake in some degree of their nature; still, in itself, this is happiness of the lowest kind: but yet it is happiness which God has made distinct, and expensive arrangements for; and these arrangements, therefore, clearly speak his love.

The number and variety of these simple pleasures, which the senses may be the means of affording, is immense, and each must have required its own separate mechanism, to secure it. I refer to the mechanism of the heart, not of the organ of sense, by which the image comes in. The feeling, for example, which is awakened by the sight of running water, is totally different, not in degree, but in kind, from that which we experience in looking upon a tender, full, bursting rose-bud in the spring;—and both are diverse from the emotion, awakened by looking out at midnight upon a sombre moon-light scene, among the solitudes of the mountains. The same mechanism of the eye answers for all, but the heart must have its own peculiar and appropriate susceptibilities for each. And so with all the other thousand susceptibilities of enjoyment, which the human heart possesses. Each is the result of a special arrangement, made expressly to secure it.

And yet all these, numerous as they are, and high as they would be, in the degree of enjoyment they would procure for us, were it not for the corroding anxieties of sin, belong to the lowest class of human enjoyments. So much so, that in most religious treatises upon the benevolence of God, they are scarcely named. There are far higher, and nobler plans, which God has formed for the happiness of his creatures.

Higher pleasures. Employment. The merchant's counting-room.

2. Among these higher plans, is the pleasure which God has annexed to the faithful and proper performance of the duties of life. Each kind of employment, seems to have its own peculiar and appropriate pleasure. One man is stationed on a farm, which he holds as a little empire, within which he is almost supreme, and the whole arrangement of the circumstances of his connection with it, is such as to afford him the highest happiness in administering his government there. Another is a merchant. You look into his counting-room, and see nothing there, but a high desk and a three-legged stool, and a row of ponderous ledgers. "What a place for a human being to spend his days in!" you exclaim. What a place?—why, in that cheerless looking room, there are found all the materials for the highest intellectual and moral enjoyment. In planning those voyages, in effecting sales, in transferring value from one form to another, in inspecting his periodical balance sheet, and watching his losses and gains, and examining the causes which affect them,—in all these things the occupant finds continual happiness, and returns day after day to his work, with all the eager interest, which a child feels in the progress of a game. God has constructed the human heart so, that the work of transferring and exchanging the various products of the earth, from the places where they grow, to the places where they are needed, is not a drudgery,—a hard, unwelcome toil,—but an exhilarating, animating game, which they, whose duty it is to attend to it, may pursue with pleasure. Let it be observed that I say it *may* be pursued with pleasure. For men may, as they very often do, make it a work of toil and misery. They may be so greedy of gain, as to be always on the point of encroaching upon other persons rights, and thus always be in contention;—or they may go so far beyond the bounds of sound judgment, as to be harassed with continual anxiety and care;—or they may yield to fretfulness and vexation, upon every little disappointment or difficulty. In these and

in other ways, they may make the work which God intended should be pleasant, one of anxiety, toil, and suffering. But this does not affect the nature of his plan.

A third individual is a mechanic, and God has so formed his mental powers, that the work of invention and construction is a positive and a lasting pleasure to him. He will sit in his solitary room till the morning dawns, planning the details of a machine,—held to his work by an appetite which God has given him for it;—and if he is industrious, and systematic, and faithful, he will find day after day, continued and almost unalloyed happiness in managing his establishment, arranging his work, and in seeing one useful object after another accomplished, by the exercise of his ingenuity and skill. Thus God is not a task-master, driving us to our duties by the force of suffering,—he is a kind and benevolent friend, giving us pleasant employment and making our greatest happiness to consist in the faithful performance of it.

It is so with all the employments of life. There may be some hours of fatigue, and now and then a crisis demanding toil, of a character that we shrink from. But these are so few, as only to brighten by the contrast, what would be the happiness of a man's ordinary lot, if his daily duties were performed in a faithful and proper manner. For we are not to consider what is the actual amount of enjoyment obtained in the ordinary pursuits of life, but what would be the actual amount if men would attend to these pursuits, in the manner which God has required. If they were faithful, industrious, moderate in their wishes, cautious in their plans, and if they felt that filial confidence in him which would enable them to cast on him all responsibility and care.

3. God has planned human happiness of a still higher kind, by making the heart susceptible of love, and requiring men to exercise love towards one another. This union of heart, by which he meant to have all his creatures bound

together, would give rise to far deeper emotions of happiness, than either of those already named, or rather it would mingle with and brighten these. How much greater delight will two children often feel in the friendship of one another, than in gazing into the beautiful brook, or walking upon the shore; or rather, how will their happiness be increased tenfold by the opportunity of playing by the brook, or rambling upon the sea shore *together*. There is a double enjoyment in love,—the pleasure of feeling affection, and the pleasure of being the object of it; it is hard to tell which is the greatest. A man will sometimes neglect his family, that he may increase a little the rapidity with which his fortune accumulates. The game in his counting-room interests him more than the circle at his fireside;—but he makes a sad mistake, to barter for the interest of such a work, the far richer, deeper emotions of happiness, which he might secure by loving and being beloved. So men every where are eager to secure their own rights to the uttermost farthing, and consequently, live in a constant scene of jealousy, suspicion, and angry disputes. How badly they judge;—for the sake of a little more land, or a little greater influence, or a little more rapid gain, to lose the real, substantial, enduring happiness of peace, and harmony, and happy union. And all this loss is in consequence of a deviation from God's plan. His wish is, to secure for us all, the happiness of union. He has planned society so as to link men together in a thousand ways,—and that too, by links so strong and so intricately fastened, that we cannot loosen them. He intended that we should be happy *together*.

See how he has grouped men in families,—having laid the foundation of this institution so deep in the very constitution of man, that there has been no nation, no age,—scarcely a single savage tribe, that has not been drawn to the result which he intended. For thousands of years, this institution has been assailed by every power, which could

shake it by violence from without, or undermine it by treachery within. Lust and passion have risen in rebellion against it,—Atheism has again and again advanced to the attack,—but it stands unmoved. It has been indebted to no human power for its defence. It has needed no defence. It stands on the firm, sure, everlasting foundations which God has made for it. Wars, famine, pestilence, and revolutions have swept over the face of society, carrying every where confusion, terror, and distress;—Time has undermined and destroyed every thing which his tooth could touch, and all *human* institutions have thus been altered and destroyed in the lapse of ages. But the *Family* lives on: it stands firm and unshaken. It finds its way wherever human beings go, it survives every shock, and rises again unharmed, after every tempest which blows over the social sky. It is a contrivance for human happiness, and God has laid its foundations too deep and strong to be removed.

And then too, God has so planned the human heart, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed in this world, that men must live together in social communities. He has done this with the design that mutual kindness, aid and affection should heighten the happiness of the whole. These feelings, if they existed, would smooth the path, and quiet the fears, and assuage the sorrows of every man, and more than double every earthly enjoyment.

4. The benevolence of God shows itself most conspicuously in his plans for preventing sin, and for stopping the progress and the consequences of it, when it is committed. Temporary suffering, however severe, including all the varieties of physical evil, is nothing compared with the miseries of sin,—that viper, whose fangs the wretched sufferer never can extract, and whose wounds never heal. All other ills human fortitude is sufficient to bear. There is grief:—One may follow to the grave a wife, a mother, a husband, a sister, a child,—many of these losses may, one

after another, inflict their wounds; but there is a strength in the human heart, which bears itself up under them all. There is poverty and disappointment:—One may see hopes blasted, his plans destroyed, and all the ills of penury made his inevitable portion, for the remainder of his days; there is a fortitude which can bear these things. There is sickness and pain:—One may be a prey to disease, whose intense pangs goad the sufferer almost to distraction, or whose wearisome confinement knows no intermission for years;—there is many a patient sufferer to be found, who can bear it all with submission. But there is no manliness, no fortitude in the human spirit, which can bear it up under the horrors of guilt,—past, irrecoverably past, and yet rising in all its vivid coloring to the soul which has incurred it, and overwhelming it with remorse and despair. The reproaches of a conscience once thoroughly aroused, can neither be silenced nor borne. They come, bringing with them the frown of God. They bring with them recollections of the past, which pierce the soul with anguish, and terrific forebodings as to the future, which overwhelm it with horror. No human spirit can sustain its energies, under such a burden, when it really comes.

Compared with the evil, and the attendant sufferings of sin, all physical ills sink into utter insignificance. The blind and lame wanderer, without house or home, may have a quiet conscience and a firm hope of happiness in heaven, which will take away the sting of all his sorrows; while the wealthy lover of the world, may spend his days in misery, under the galling yoke which he has brought upon him, by leading a life of sin. Who is it that is driven to suicide, by intensity of suffering? Not the sick man, tortured and worn out with protracted and bodily pain;—not the half starved or half frozen Indian, or gipsy;—it is the fraudulent debtor,—the guilty defaulter,—the criminal exposed. Yes, guilt is the fountain of real suffering,—and the greatest of all the displays of the benevolence of God, is, his

great original plan and his present efforts to atone for guilt and wipe it away.

And besides,—as we shall see more fully as we proceed, sin is the source of nearly all the temporal sufferings of mankind, and there can be no permanent relief from suffering but by reclaiming from sin. Go for instance to the house of a profligate and abandoned man, and when you see the wretched condition of his desolate and suffering family, make a kind and vigorous effort to relieve them. Kindle up a blazing fire upon the dying embers over which you found them shivering. Cover them with comfortable clothing, and replenish, with a bountiful hand, their exhausted stores. After a few weeks, return and visit them again. The fire has long since burned away, and the miserable cabin is as cold as before. The children are again in rags, and the mother is again vainly striving to bar her door against the devourer, hunger.

Suppose, again, that, dissatisfied with so partial and temporary a relief, you make a second effort of a different nature You seek, and by the blessing of God, you reform *the man*. Return again at the end of a few months, and an industrious and frugal hand will be extended to you at the door, to welcome you to a happy family, and to a permanently comfortable home; and you may now even take provisions from his store, and fuel from his pile, and carry relief to others that are miserable.

This is a very simple case, but it illustrates an universal principle which lies at the foundation of all wise and effectual benevolence. Bring men back to God and to duty, and their happiness is safe. Leave them in sin, and you can make no sensible or permanent impression upon their miseries. It seems as if God, in his providence, pursues to a degree, to which human feeling is hardly prepared to follow, the plan of leaving the miseries of sin to cut their own dreadful way,—expending all his energies in removing their cause. His benevolence is most conspicuous in his

plans for spreading the dominion of holiness throughout his empire,—and especially in this world, in his efforts to reclaim mankind from their sins.

Such is God's plan for promoting human happiness. It aims at promoting enjoyment of every kind and in every way. It is of a cheerful, happy character, too. The benevolence which we often see exercised by men, is sombre, stern and gloomy,—looking only at the great, serious interests of humanity, and perhaps dwelling too exclusively on the great futurity. The benevolence of God, while it aims first at these great interests, does not neglect the others. It takes a cheerful and pleasant view of the present condition of man, and tries to make him happy to-day, as well as to prepare him for happiness to-morrow. It decks all nature in smiles, and arranges those thousand influences which speak for the moment to the heart and give it a transitory happiness. God gives conscience a seat in the human soul, speaking strongly through her, of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come, that he may make men happy in eternity;—he also adorns their present home with a thousand beauties, and arranges a countless variety of agreeable employments for them, that he may make them happy here. He clothes the earth with a useful vegetation to supply the substantial wants of the creatures he has formed; and he also brings out the lovely hues of the flowers, and arranges all the delightful influences of morning and evening, that he may gratify the eye, and please the fancy. He does not coldly and sternly pursue what we call utility alone. He has taste, and has ornamented his whole creation most richly, to give us, together with the substantial supply of every want, the charms of elegance and refinement. His plan is thus to communicate to our souls, a cheerful, happy influence, to gladden them at the present moment, as well as to prepare them for substantial happiness to come. The Christian, therefore, who wishes to do good on principle, and to be

the cooperator with God, must act in a similar way. He must come and give himself up to his Maker's service, and aim at carrying out all his plans. He must first of all strive to bring men back to their allegiance to him, since without this, every other plan for promoting human happiness must fail. Then he must do all he can to promote the present enjoyment of all God's creatures, in every way in his power. He must love happiness on a small scale, as well as on a large scale,—he must wish that all around him should enjoy themselves now, as well as a thousand years hence, and a thousand years hence, as well as now. This benevolence must reign so constantly in the heart, as to give an habitual character to the feelings, and expression to the countenance, and tone to the voice, so that the presence and the influence of the cooperator with God, may speak in the same language to all around him, which the expression of the face of nature so plainly conveys to the heart that is reconciled and forgiven, and feels that its Maker is really its Friend.

This, then, my reader, is the work which you must do, if you wish to cooperate with God. These are the objects you must aim at,—not occasionally,—not now and then merely, when some details of suffering obtrude themselves upon your mind, and awaken a temporary *feeling*,—but steadily, constantly, unweariedly, as the great business of life. Your own happiness will thus indeed be much promoted, but your aim in pursuing these objects must not be your own happiness, but the accomplishment of the objects themselves,—extending the reign of holiness, and fulfilling your duty as a grateful and obedient child of God.

CHAPTER III.

OURSELVES.

"A wounded spirit, who can bear."

THE reader may perhaps be surprised to find in a work on doing good, that one of the first chapters of practical directions is devoted to *self*. But our duties in respect to the promotion of our own happiness, are very often and very sadly neglected. There is selfishness enough in the world, no doubt,—and eager desires to promote one's own interests in respect to property, and rights, and influence, and power,—but there is very little sober, judicious, steady effort to secure personal happiness.

And yet it is plainly a duty to do this. If the happiness of the whole community is desirable, then is, of course, the happiness of every individual who is a member of it. And each one who aims at promoting universal enjoyment, must take especial care to secure his own. While he feels that his own enjoyment is no more important than that of every other individual, he must also remember that it is no less so. In fact, his desire to secure the happiness of others, is actually regulated in the Savior's law, by the measure of his interest in his own.

And here I ought to point out to my young readers a distinction, which, though simply metaphysical in its character, is very important to a full understanding of this subject. It is often said that all men are pursuing happiness, and must, by the very constitution and law of their nature, —that they may mistake the mode, as they often do, but that there is no want of the disposition to seek it.

Now it will appear, on a more attentive consideration of human nature, that all men are not pursuing happiness. They have other objects which they pursue as ends, not as mere means. For example, a man in political life is pressing forward, and making every effort to obtain a certain

Love of fame or of power distinct from love of happiness.

place of influence. It is not, however, from any calculation he has made that this is the way to find *happiness*. He will tell you, if you ask him, that he has never enjoyed any happiness since he entered the scene of strife, hatred and war, in which he is involved, and that he never expects to find any till he leaves it. Why then, you ask, does he not abandon the ground? Because there is, in the very constitution of his soul, a thirst for *power* and *fame*, as well as a thirst for *happiness*, and circumstances have so inflamed and excited the one, that he scarcely heeds the other. He presses forward in his course, because he is *ambitious*, not because he wishes to be happy; that is, he seeks political elevation on its own account,—as an end,—he feels a thirst for it, which thirst can be slaked in no other way than by the attainment of the particular thing he seeks. It is true that there is a kind of pleasure in indulging this and all the other simple propensities of the human heart: but it is not a calculation on this pleasure which carries a man onward. The mind rests or reposes on the power, or the fame, as its ultimate end,—as a good in itself,—not as a means merely of securing happiness.

Thus, so far from all seeking happiness, there is a great number and variety of objects which we seek, each of which is felt by the heart to be a good in itself, and is sought on its own account. Sometimes we distinctly understand that the path which we are taking, is leading us actually away from happiness, and yet we will press on in it. How frequently does this take place in reference to some besetting sin. We press on to the committing of it, conscious, all the time, that we are only making misery for ourselves. It is not in such a case that under the influence of a hallucination, we think that sin is a *means* of happiness, but that under the dominion of one of the original and simple impulses of our nature, we love sin *rather than* happiness. Just as a hungry man eats, not under the influence of a cool calculation that food is a necessary means of

preserving life, but impelled by an instinct of nature, resting on the food as its ultimate object. He will even, when, in a starving condition, he comes upon an unexpected supply, obey this impulse to such a degree, as to destroy the very life which he ought to endeavor to save; and that too, when he is warned that this will be the effect. He does not mistake the way to preserve his life,—but the cravings of starvation, demand food so loudly as to overpower even the love of life.*

So the love for happiness is overpowered by the tumultory clamors of the crowd of ungodly lusts and passions which fill the human bosom. Men are employed eagerly, indefatigably, in making money,—not for the sake of happiness, but for the sake of the money. The mind reposes upon possession as the good,—the ultimate end which it seeks. Instead of desiring happiness, and planning with reference to the attainment of it, the thought perhaps never comes into the head, from one end of the year to the other. Ask a hundred merchants whether the way they have adopted for the management of their business is the best, i. e. the most profitable way, and they will all be ready with an answer; they will show you that they have looked at that subject all around, and are pursuing their present plans with the deliberate expectation that they are the best they can form. But ask them whether their plans of life are those which they think best adapted to secure their highest happiness, and they will stare at your question in vacant surprise. If they give any answer,

* If any of my readers entertain views of the human mind which lead them to maintain, that by a careful analysis, we shall find that obedience to these impulses is, in fact, only one of the forms which love of happiness assumes, they must not consider these remarks as intended to conflict with that theory at all. I use the phrase, "love of happiness," in its ordinary, popular signification;—as this work is designed solely for popular use; and for all popular and practical purposes, there is a wide distinction between the rational search for happiness, and blind obedience to the instincts and impulses of nature, as all will admit, whatever may be their metaphysical theories.

it will be a mechanical one,—or if they really look at the question, in order to give an honest reply, ninety of them will see that it is a question they never have considered. They have been living on from year to year, obeying certain impulses, but never forming any serious plans for happiness, or even taking the subject into account.

"He never will be very rich," said a gentleman describing a certain Christian merchant, "because he had rather be happy than rich." It was a philosophical distinction, and it designated a state of mind which is not very often found among those who have the opportunity of making a fortune.

You have, therefore, my reader, two questions to ask yourself in reference to the subject of this chapter. First, are you happy now? Consider and answer it understandingly. Is your mind at peace, and does the current of time as it passes on, bring hours of enjoyment to you, day after day. Look back to the past week; think of the feelings with which you have engaged in your duties; call to mind your employments, your connections with others, your daily routine of duty, and the manner in which you have performed it;—and then ask yourself the question whether you are happy. Or is there something wrong? Is there a corroding, restless uneasiness,—an unsettled, anxious mind, such that your days pass on without much real enjoyment?

The second question is whether you *wish* for happiness, and are willing to plan for it. Or is your heart set upon making money, or gaining fame, or gratifying appetite or passion? These impulses will lead you in a very different path from that which conducts to happiness, and it is very important that you should decide distinctly which you will pursue. If it is happiness which you really wish for, and if, for the sake of securing it, you are willing to give up what is inconsistent with it,—sin, appetite, covetousness, ambition, passion, and every thing else which comes in

its way, you may easily, with God's blessing, accomplish your desire. Here follow some rules.

1. See that you make your peace with God *thoroughly*. This book, being a continuation of the Young Christian and Corner-Stone, takes for granted that the reader has had fully explained to him the necessity and the nature of repentance and conversion. I shall not now, therefore, repeat what has already been said on that subject. No person can be happy who does not confess and forsake his sins, and make peace with God;—that is very plain,—and we are altogether too far on in the course of our instructions to the young Christian, to urge it here. It is one of the elements which we have gone by. The point to be urged here, is not merely that you must confess and forsake sin in order to enjoy peace and happiness, but that you must do it *thoroughly*, and frequently, so as to keep at all times in a state of perfect peace with God.

The religious history of the soul is commonly this. A young man when first convicted of sin, and brought to heartfelt repentance, feels so overwhelmed with a sense of the enormity of his guilt, and his heart is so full of love and gratitude to God, that it seems to him that he can never wander again. Sin seems to have lost all her power. Temptation is robbed of all her alluring colors, and stands exposed before him, the object of his utter aversion. He wonders that he could have sinned as he has done, and is sure that he can never do so again.

But sin is wounded, not destroyed. The evil plant is cut down, but not eradicated. The roots remain, and in a few days or weeks, when the excitement of his first ardor is over, they begin,—slowly,—to sprout again. Whatever his great besetting sins may have been, they appear again, disguised, however, by assuming a modified form, and intermingled with other and better plants in the garden of his heart,—so that he does not notice them. He is busy about something else, and in the meantime the noxious

weeds grow on, but grow so gradually, that though he at last begins to see them, they do not startle him. He gets accustomed to them, before he observes them.

By and by he finds himself indulging sin, and perhaps committing overt acts which imply that he has made a very considerable progress in his downward road. Some Saturday night as he is returning to rest, he thinks, just as his faculties are sinking into slumber, that he has, to all intents and purposes, actually neglected secret prayer during the whole week. His moral sensibilities are however so much blunted, that he does not feel the guilt of this, but still he recollects how often he has heard the danger of this sin pointed out, and perhaps how often and how emphatically he has himself pointed it out,—and he feels a moment's alarm. But it is a very superficial alarm; he commences a prayer, but before he has framed many of his petitions, his growing drowsiness overpowers both conscience and reason, and he sinks to sleep. The only effect of this momentary alarm is, not to make him return to his duty on the next week, but only to feel a little more uneasy in the neglect of it.

Or perhaps his besetting sin is pride, or sensuality,—the indulgence of some appetite, or animal passion,—or worldliness, or covetousness; and he finds after a time, that these sins, though he hoped they were crucified and slain, are still existing in all their strength. They have returned however, in the manner already explained, so gradually, that he has become familiar with their dominion again They have fastened their chains upon him by slow degrees, and he has gradually become accustomed to their thraldom, so that he does not arouse himself to any vigorous effort to escape; he only perceives his condition just often enough, and just distinctly enough, to make him uneasy and unhappy. God withdraws from him and hides his face. His prayers are not heard. He knows they are not heard. He perhaps keeps up the form, but he feels guilty and

condemned all the time But the most that he does, in the way of repentance and return, is to say now and then, in a moment of more serious reflection than usual, "I am wandering sadly from God: I *must* return. This will never do; for I am destroying my peace and happiness, and endangering my soul." Then he sinks again into his lethargy.

Now what I mean to say to the reader, in respect to this part of my subject, is this. If you wish to be happy,—if you wish to have any real peace, any steady and substantial enjoyment, you must make up your mind *decidedly*, whether you will be the child of God, or not. If you expect him to take you under his care, you must be *his*, really, honestly, thoroughly,—not merely in pretence and in form. If you find, therefore, in looking into your heart, that you are not happy, it is very probable that the cause may be, that you are not really and fully at peace with God. You have only declared a truce, and then recommenced hostilities. Of course, you cannot expect to enjoy a quiet and a happy heart. You may depend upon it, that your days must be days of uneasiness and misery, until you come and make yourself wholly the Lord's. To secure your happiness then, your first duty is most faithfully and thoroughly to examine your spiritual condition,—to confess and to crucify your dearest sins, and casting yourself upon the merits and atonement of your Savior, to make a complete and lasting peace with God. Then you will be prepared to go on to the next step.

2. And the next step, in the order of importance, is, to see that all your worldly affairs are *in order*. The magic power of system in facilitating effort, has often been praised, but it has, if possible, a still greater power to promote happiness. People talk about the cares of business, the perplexities of their daily lot, the endless intricacies in which they find themselves involved. But they are, nine out of ten of them, the cares of mismanagement,—the perplexities and the intricacies of confusion. The burdens of human

life, are, probably, upon the average, doubled, and sometimes rendered ten-fold greater than they otherwise would be, by the want of regularity and system. The proof of this is, that when a man, either from some native peculiarity of mind, or the effect of early education, acquires the habit of order and method, he can accomplish more than twice as much as ordinary men,—and of all the men in the community, he is the most likely never to be in a hurry,—but always to be calm and quiet, and to have leisure for any new and sudden call. Now, if he can do twice as much, with no more care and hurry, it is plain that he could perform the ordinary work of man, with a far more quiet and peaceful mind. This is unquestionable. The facts are notorious, and the inference from them immediate and irresistible.

But let us look more particularly at the manner in which irregularity and confusion, in the management of worldly business, affects the peace and happiness of the heart. There are few persons so correct in this respect, that they will not find a testimony within them, to the truth of what I shall say. We will begin with a very simple case.

James is a school-boy. His affairs, though not quite so intrinsically extensive and important, as those of an East India merchant, are still important to him. He has his business, his cares, his disappointments, and the conditions of success and happiness are the same with him as with all mankind. We will, therefore, take his case as the basis of our illustration, as we hope this chapter will be read by many a school-boy, and the imagination of the man can more easily descend to the school-boy's scene of labor, than the boy's ascend to that of the man.

James, then, as I have said, is a school-boy, and his first duty in the morning,—I speak only of his worldly duties here,—is to rise at six o'clock, and make the fires in his father's house. James hears the clock strike six,—but it

is cold, and he shrinks from his morning's task, so he lies still, postponing the necessary effort; his mind, all the time dwelling upon it and dreading it, and his conscience goading and worrying him with the thought that he is doing wrong. Thus pass fifteen minutes most wretchedly. The mistake he makes, is in imagining that of the two evils, a little sensation of cold on his face and limbs, while dressing, and on the other hand, the corroding tooth of a disturbed conscience, gnawing within,—the former is the greatest. So he quietly waits, suffering the latter for fifteen or twenty minutes, until the lapse of time makes it too intolerable to be borne any longer, and then he slowly forces himself out of his bed; when he finds,—sagacious boy,—that he has got still to bear the other evil, after all. Instead of taking the least of the two evils, he has taken both, and the bitterest first. Many of my readers will acquit themselves of James's folly. But be not in haste. Do you never in any way procrastinate duty? Look over your mental memorandum, and see if there is nothing upon it that you ought to do, but which you have been putting off, and putting off, because you have been dreading it. If so, you are James completely. He who procrastinates duty which he knows at last must be done, always does, of two evils, choose both, beginning with the bitterest portion.

I said James had chosen two evils. He has, in fact, chosen three, for the recollection of this neglect of duty, or rather the impression it has made, will continue all the morning. For hours, there will be a settled uneasiness in his mind, whose cause and origin he may not distinctly understand, though he might find it, if he would search for it. He feels restless and miserable, though he knows not exactly why.

When James comes down to his work, he finds no proper preparation made. The wood, which ought to have been carefully prepared the evening before, is out under the snow. The fire has gone out, and his tinderbox he cannot

find. He has no place for it, and of course he has to search for it at random. When he finds it, the matches are gone, the flint is worn out, and only a few shreds of tinder remain. Perplexed and irritated *at the box*, instead of being penitent for his own sinful negligence, he toils for a long time, and at last meets with partial success in kindling his morning fires, an hour after the proper time. The family, however, do not distinctly call him to account for his negligence, for the family which produces such a character, will generally be itself as shiftless as he. Still, though he expects to sustain no immediate accountability, he feels uneasy and restless, especially as he finds that his postponed and neglected morning's work, is encroaching upon the time he had allotted to his morning's lesson.

For James is, as I have already said, a school-boy, and the lesson which he is to be called upon to recite, as soon as he enters school in the morning, he had postponed from the evening before, when it ought to have been studied, to the half hour after breakfast, which, without any reason, he expected that he should find. Acting without plan and without calculation, he is, of course, disappointed, and when he rises from his breakfast table, he seems surprised to find that it is time for school to begin. He hurries away to make his preparations,—to *find* his books, and his hat, and his coat,—for every morning they have to be *found*. He goes about the house with chafed feelings, scowling brow and fretful tone, displeased with every body and every thing, except the proper object of displeasure,—himself.

He hurries to school. It is a bright and beautiful winter morning, and every thing external tends to calm the mind to peaceful happiness, or to awaken emotions of joy. But James cannot be happy. Even if he should now begin to be faithful in duty, it would be many hours before the turbulent sea of commotion which he has raised among the moral feelings of his heart, would subside. He worries along, restless, anxious,—conscience gnawing upon him,—

unhappy, he knows not why,—and looking away from himself, at the external circumstances in which he is placed, as the sources of his sufferings, instead of finding their true cause within.

I need not follow him through the day. Every one will see, that with such habits, he must be miserable. And yet James is not a bad boy, in the common sense of the word. He has no vices. He will not steal. He will not lie. He loves his father and mother, and never directly disobeys them, or does any thing intentionally to give them pain. And perhaps my readers will be much surprised, to have me tell them that he is a Christian. He is, nevertheless, a sincere Christian. He has repented of his sins, and made his peace with God, and lives in the daily habit of communion with God. In his hours of retirement and prayer, he experiences many seasons of high enjoyment,—and yet generally he leads a very wretched life. A constant, wearing, irritating uneasiness corrodes his inmost soul, he knows not why or wherefore. In fact, he seldom inquires why. He has borne it so long and so constantly, that he has no idea that serenity, peace of mind, and steady happiness, is within the reach of the human soul, in this world. Thus he goes on, accomplishing very little, and suffering a great deal; and the reader must remember that it is the last,—the suffering,—that we are now considering; for our object, in this chapter, is, not to show how want of system, and regularity, and faithfulness, interferes with success in life, but how it annihilates happiness.

Very many of my readers now, will probably find, by careful examination of themselves, that though their circumstances and condition may be totally different from those of James, their characters are substantially like his. Disorder, irregularity, and perhaps confusion, reign in your affairs. Instead of acting on a general plan, having your business well arranged, your accounts settled, your work in advance,—you act from impulse, and temporary neces-

sity. Instead of looking forward and foreseeing duty and providing for its claims, regularly and methodically, you wait until it forces itself upon you, and then waste your time and your spirits in hesitating on the question, which of two things, both apparently duty, you shall do; or by endeavoring to provide, by temporary shifts, for unexpected emergencies, which need not have been unexpected or unprovided for. You neglect or postpone unpleasant duties, leaving them to hang a burden upon your mind, marring your peace and happiness, until at length, you are forced to attend to them, not, however, until some new neglect or postponement is ready to supply their place by a new thorn of irritation in your side.

I say then that the second great rule for the securing of your own personal happiness, is, to reduce all your worldly business, your affairs, your property, your domains, your employments, your pleasures,—reduce *every thing to order*. Without it, you cannot have a peaceful mind, and of course, cannot be happy. But I must be more particular in describing what I mean. For as the book is designed for practical usefulness, I may often properly descend from the dignity of general moral instruction, to minute and specific details of duty.

Suppose, then, you are the master of a family. Now unless your household affairs are all well arranged, and conducted methodically, they will be a source of uneasiness to you. A gate hanging by one hinge, or a broken latch, or a caster off of a piece of furniture, are mere trifles in themselves; and so is the point of a thorn, broken off in your hand, and one is just such a sort of trifle as the other. You will find, probably, if you possess the difficult art of analyzing your own feelings, that a very large portion of the uncomfortable feelings, you have during those hours which you spend at home,—for I suppose, of course, that you are a Christian, and have no serious anxieties about eternity,—arise from just such things. Now make thorough

work of it, and remove them all. Arouse your moral resolution, and take hold at once. Go through your premises, and see that every thing is as it ought to be. Whenever you find any difficulty,—any thing that produces friction and disturbance, stop till you have devised and applied the best remedy you can. See that things have their places, and that they keep them. See too, that duties and employments have their *times*, and that they keep them. Do this kindly, gently, but firmly. Interest others in the work of cooperating with you in the change, and you will find that a few hours' attention to this single field of labor—hours, too, which may perhaps be taken from several successive days,—you will remove a mass of causes of anxiety, and sources of uneasiness and mental friction, which you had no idea existed.

Perhaps you are the mistress of a family;—and sometimes you feel dejected and sad, you know not why. It is very probable that it may be because you are unsystematic and irregular in your sphere of duty. Is your house in order? Look around and see. Look into your drawers, your closets, your bureaus, and imagine that a stranger of distinction, whose good opinion you were desirous of securing, is making the examination with you. You may perhaps think it strange, that such a subject as order in drawers and closets, should be introduced into a book of religious instruction. But do you never consider, when you tell your child that, though he may conceal his faults from the eyes of man, he cannot conceal them from the eye of God,—that the same God sees very distinctly, all that you would so studiously conceal from your visiters and your friends? Or do you think that you are not responsible, for the manner in which you arrange and manage the affairs of your household; that domain, which God has so peculiarly confided to you;—or imagine, when you attempt to conceal the evidences of untidiness or confusion from the eyes of men, that *any thing* will do to satisfy God?

Are his ideas of order and method less high, do you suppose, than those of your neighbors, that you should fear their scrutiny more than his?

Put your house in order. Not merely in respect to its arrangement, but in respect to all your duties, in the administration of your sacred trust. Consider deliberately, in your hours of retirement, what your duties are, and arrange them. See that you devote a proper portion of time to them all. Ought you to cultivate the morals of your children? Then do it regularly, systematically; have a plan for it. Ought you to cultivate your own mind? Then make provision for this duty. Ought you to devote any portion of your time to the occupations and pleasures of social intercourse? If so, understand distinctly that it is your duty, and consider how far it is your duty: and make specific provision for it. I do not mean that you are to mark out the hours of your day, and allot to every one its prescribed task, as a school-boy may very properly do. This, I well know, would be impossible, were you to attempt it, and would be unwise, were it possible. It may, and in fact, it ought to be done, in respect to those duties which form a part of the daily routine of employment, but in regard to others, it is neither possible nor wise. What I mean, is, that the various occupations which have a claim upon you, should all be examined, and that that portion which you ought to undertake, should be marked out and well defined. What comes within these limits will be duty. Reduce then, to some system and method, what you ought to do, and you may proceed with your daily avocations with a quiet and happy heart. Without it, you will always be restless and uneasy. As you walk about your house, you will continually find objects to irritate and vex you. Your various duties will jostle one another in their rush upon you, and in their disputes for your attention; and the time for attending to all of them will glide by, while you are hearing their conflicting claims. Thus many hours of

every day will be passed in useless indecision, bringing restless uneasiness to the heart so often, and continuing it so long, that at length this will become its settled and permanent character. You try, you think, to be faithful,—you certainly are hurried and busy enough, and you indulge yourself in but little real recreation. Still you are not successful. Life does not pass smoothly with you. You do not accomplish what you wish, and what you see some others do accomplish. You are wretched, and yet you do not know why.

But perhaps my reader is a school-boy, and inquires how these principles apply to his case. Put all *your* business in order too. Look over your affairs, and consider what your duties and employments ought to be, and see that all are properly arranged and systematized. Have a place, and see too that it is the *best* place, for your hat, your coat, your sled, your books,—all your property of every kind. Consider what your daily work at home is,—for every boy ought to have some daily responsibility at home,—and see whether you perform this in the best way. Make regular and proper preparations for it. Have your tools and implements in good order, and arranged in the most convenient places. See that you do all your work in season, i. e. a little before the season, so as never to be hurried, and never to feel that you are behind hand. See that your desk in school is in good order,—and every thing in it arranged in the most convenient way for use, and do the same with your shelves and drawers at home;—so that you could go in the dark, and find any article in your possession, by putting your hand where it *ought to be.*

If, now, your habits are, in these respects, as irregular and disorderly as those of most boys, it will require some time, and not a little faithful, vigorous effort, to accomplish such a thorough revolution as is essential to your happiness. But you may be assured that such a revolution is essential. While every thing is in confusion,—your books

The man of business. Unsettled accounts; unfinished plans.

lost, your habits irregular, and your duties performed without method and system, only as they are forced upon your attention, you never can be happy. Unpleasant associations will be connected with all you see. Almost every object which meets your eye, at school or at home, will remind you of your remissness or neglect,—and of the sad, shiftless condition of all your affairs. And though you may not distinctly think of the cause, you will find arising from it a constant, restless uneasiness of mind, which will follow you every where, and effectually destroy your happiness.

So, whatever may be the reader's situation and condition in life, if he wishes to be happy, let him regulate his affairs. If you have uncertain, unsettled accounts open,—which you have been dreading to examine, go and explore the cases thoroughly and have them closed. If there have been duties neglected, which have still been lying like a weight upon your mind, go and perform them at once. If there are plans which you have been intending to accomplish, but which you have been postponing and postponing, thinking of them from time to time, and saying to yourself, you *must* attend to them,—summon your resolution, and carry them at once into effect, or else determine to abandon them, and dismiss them from your thoughts. The mind of a young and ardent man becomes loaded with crude, half formed designs, unfinished plans, and duties postponed. He is like a child unaccustomed to the world, who takes a walk on a pleasant summer's day. Every object seems valuable, and he picks up a pebble here, and a stick there, and gathers a load of great flowers in this place and that, until he becomes so encumbered with his treasures that he can hardly go on. They are constantly slipping and dropping from his hands, and become a source of perplexity and anxiety to him, because he cannot retain them all So with us. Every plan which reason forms or imagination paints, we think we must execute; but after

having made a beginning, a new project enters our heads, which we are equally eager to secure, and thus in a short time, we become encumbered with a mass of intellectual lumber, which we cannot carry, and are unwilling to leave. Now look over all these things,—consider what you can and will execute, and take hold of the execution of them now. Abandon the rest, so that you may move forward with a mind free and untrammeled. It is the only way by which you can enjoy any peace or serenity of mind,—and without peace and serenity there can be no happiness.

This, then, is the second great rule for securing personal happiness. Look over your affairs, and arrange and methodize every thing. Define in your own mind, what you have to do, and dismiss every thing else. Take time for reflection, and plan all your work so as to go on smoothly, quietly and in season, so that the mind may be ahead of all its duties, choosing its own way, and going forward quietly and in peace.

There is one point in connection with this subject of the management of wordly affairs, which ought not to be passed by, and which is yet an indispensable condition of human happiness. I mean the duty of every man to bring his expenses, and his pecuniary liabilities fairly within his control. There are some cases of a peculiar character, and some occasional emergencies, perhaps, in the life of every man, which constitute exceptions; but this is the general rule.

The plentifulness of money, depends upon its relation to our expenditures. An English nobleman, with an annual income of £50,000, may be pressed for money, and be harassed by it to such a degree as to make life a burden; while an Irish laborer, on a railroad in New England, with eighty cents a day, in the dead of winter, may have a plentiful supply. Reduce, then, your expenditures, and your style of living, and *your business too*, so far below your pecuniary means, that you may have money in plenty.

Pecuniary embarrassment. Way to avoid.

There is, perhaps, nothing which so grinds the human soul, and produces such an insupportable burden of wretchedness and despondency, as pecuniary pressure. Nothing more frequently drives men to suicide. And there is, perhaps, no danger to which men in an active and enterprising community, are more exposed. Almost all are eagerly reaching forward to a station in life, a little above what they can well afford, or struggling to do a business a little more extensive than they have capital or steady credit for; and thus they keep, all through life, just above their means;—and *just above*, no matter by how small an excess, is inevitable misery.

Be sure then, if your aim is happiness, to bring down, at all hazards, your style of living, and your responsibilities of business, to such a point that you shall *easily* be able to reach it. Do this, I say, at all hazards. If you cannot have money enough for your purposes, in a house with two rooms, take a house with one. It is your only chance for happiness. For there is such a thing as happiness, in a single room, with plain furniture and simple fare; but there is no such thing as happiness, with responsibilities which cannot be met, and debts increasing, without any prospect of their discharge. If your object is gentility, or the credit of belonging to good society,—or the most rapid accumulation of property, and you are willing to sacrifice happiness for it, I might, perhaps, give you different advice. But if your object is happiness, this is the only way.

The principles which we have thus far laid down, as the means of attaining personal happiness, relate to our duties in respect, more particularly, to ourselves. Our happiness will depend very much also upon the state of our relations with others. There are certain principles, which must regulate these relations, or we cannot enjoy peace and happiness. The other beings with whom we have chiefly to do, are our fellow men and God, and by our feelings and conduct towards both, we often mar and poison our own enjoyment.

1. By contentions with the injustice and selfishness of men; and,

2. By struggling and repining against the Providence of God.

We must devote a few pages to each of these subjects.

1. Contentions with men.

Christianity makes the human soul unyielding, uncompromising, firm even unto death, in a matter of principle or duty: but the very reverse in all respects, in a matter of personal interest. Some Christians, however, are as strenuous in maintaining every tittle of their rights, from their neighbors and business connections, as the most hard hearted, usurious creditor is, in exacting the uttermost farthing. It is true that they endeavor to draw the line correctly, between their neighbors' interests and their own, but then they take their stand upon this line, with the determination of a soldier, and resolve that as they will not themselves encroach, so they will not submit to encroachment.

Now this principle might not lead to any difficulty in a world not fallen, but it will not do here. Intermingled, as are all the various interests of the community, and biassed as every man's view is, in respect to his own, it is impossible to ascertain where these exact boundaries are, which separate "the mine" from "the thine." The vision is affected by the disordered state of the moral affections, so that men see differently, even what they wish to see as it is; and if all men are therefore to adopt it as a principle, that they will adhere firmly to every thing which they honestly believe to be their rights, they must be continually coming into collision.

Thus, any man who will look fairly at the condition of human nature, will see the necessity of mutual forbearance and concession. But all doubt in respect to duty on this subject, is put at rest by our Savior's explicit instructions. Let those of my readers who are accustomed to look upon

firmness in the maintenance of our own interests, as a duty, consider the following words of our Savior, and ask what they mean.

"I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.'

Are these now really the words of Jesus Christ? And, if so, what do they mean? I admit, that they are figurative. I admit, also, that the sentiment they contain, is very strongly expressed. The more strongly, probably, in order that it might stand in a more striking contrast with the general sentiment of the day, which our Savior was endeavoring to correct. Still, they must have a meaning; they must be intended to convey a sentiment, and it is utterly impossible to derive any meaning from language, unless the speaker intended here to teach, that his followers must not be engaged in quarrels to maintain their own personal interests and rights. So far at least, the meaning of the passage is clear; and Christians ought to obey the precept. If there is a quarrel about the well you have dug, go, like Isaac, and dig another; and if this becomes the subject of contention, go and dig a third. Isaac's father, too, understood the Christian way of settling disputes. "You may take the left hand, and I will take the right, or you may take the right hand, and I will take the left. Is not the whole land before thee?"

But, says some reader, accustomed to the doctrine and practice of self-defence, such a principle will leave every man in the state of the most complete exposure to every species of injustice and oppression; and will make him a prey to the passions and the avarice of a selfish world.

To which I answer, that the principle is a principle of Jesus Christ's,—plain, unquestionable; and, if any man thinks that some other principle is a better and safer one

for men to adopt, there is a difference of opinion on the point, between him and his Master; and though he is perfectly at liberty to pursue his own course, if he chooses, he cannot pursue it, and yet pretend to be a follower of the Savior.

But it is not so. Jesus Christ understood human nature, and the influence and operation of moral causes, better than the shrewd, suspicious, watchful, and ardent defender of his rights. Any intelligent observer of facts will soon come to the conclusion, that he who will not quarrel for his rights, has his rights most respected, as he who is unarmed and will not fight, is safest from the hand of violence,—and every one who really understands human nature, will see that it always must be the case. It results from two causes.

I say that the safety of a man, who will not quarrel for his personal rights, results from two causes. First, it disarms his enemies. Contentions and quarrels acquire nearly all their acrimony, from the influence which each combatant exerts upon the other, by their mutual and reciprocal hostility. Opposition inflames and increases the ardor and the fierceness of the attack. The conscience of the aggressor is really quieted a little by the thought that an antagonist is prepared for defence. The most blood-thirsty duellist could not level his pistol, unless his enemy held a pistol too. He could not do it; and almost universally, the violent and the oppressive will be disarmed by the quietness, and peacefulness of the true Christian spirit. The worst men will feel the influence of it; as the Indian who stood with his tomahawk over the defenceless missionary, sleeping in his wigwam, said, after gazing upon him in wonder, at his voluntary exposure, "Why should I kill him?" So, in commanding men to live in peace,—not to resist evil,—or quarrel for their rights, Jesus Christ showed, that he understood better than we generally do, the secrect springs

of human action, and the principles by which human nature is controlled.*

The minds of such of my readers, as are not quite ready to adopt these views, have, undoubtedly, been busy, while reading these paragraphs, in calling up cases where those who were known not to contend, and who were, consequently, in the attitude of the unarmed and the defenceless, have suffered, and suffered severely.

They will say that defencelessness is not always safety,—that, though the duellist will not fire upon an unarmed man, yet the assassin will, and that the peaceful and the unoffending are often thus a prey to secret injustice or oppression. This is true, no doubt. And the question is not, how can a man escape all injustice, in such a world as this, and avoid every wrong; this is impossible. The question is, in what way will he escape the most of it? The mind should be busy, therefore, not in looking for cases where the peaceful have suffered, but in considering which avoid the most suffering from the injustice and selfishness of men, the peaceful or the pugnacious. We will abide by the result of any intelligent and honest observer's opinion.

But this brings us to consider the second ground of safety, for those who will not quarrel for their rights. The determination that they will not quarrel, makes them more circumspect and careful in avoiding all occasion for disa-

* We do not mean to apply these remarks to the forcible execution of the laws, by the proper authorities, nor to the question of defensive war, in the case of a foreign invasion. The precepts of our Savior to which we have alluded, were undoubtedly given with principal reference to the condition of private Christians, in their intercourse with ordinary society. Did he mean to extend them to such a case as the onset of a savage, foreign soldiery, upon a peaceful community, defenceless except by force? The manner in which Abraham's promptness in interfering without divine direction, for the rescue of Lot, by military force, is spoken of, and the directions given by John the Baptist to the soldiers, who came to hear him, and other similar passages in the Scriptures, render the answer to this question, at least, doubtful.

greement. Nine tenths of the disagreements among men, in respect to personal rights, arise from vagueness and indefiniteness in original arrangements, which might have been avoided at the proper time; and when a man adopts the principle that he will not contend, he soon learns to be distinct and definite in all his business, and thus avoids, by prudent forecast, nearly all the ordinary occasions of contention. He makes all his bargains and all his agreements with the utmost clearness and precision. If a certain neighbor of his is quarrelsome, and unreasonable, he treats him with kindness and friendliness,—but he *deals* with another man. When a case occurs by which his interests and rights are endangered, instead of working himself into a passion, in his zeal to maintain them, in the particular instance, he calmly examines the case, to see how he might have avoided the difficulty, and deduces from it a valuable principle for future guidance.

To illustrate what I mean, let us take a very simple case; two pedestrian travellers in Switzerland, of narrow finances, engage a guide at the foot of a mountain, to conduct them to its summit. On their return, they ask for his charge, and find it double what they think it ought to be. The explanation of this diversity is this. All the way up and down the mountain, the guide has been thinking of his remuneration, and wondering what it will probably be. Personal interest has been pleading all the way, for a large reward. His difficulties, his fatigues, his dangers, have all been exaggerated, and his ideas of a suitable reward, have been rising, and rising, until at length he reaches again the village whence the expedition commenced, when they stand at a level considerably elevated above the proper point. It must necessarily be so, for before the court of his conscience, only one side of the question has been argued. In other words, there has been nothing to determine and fix his ideas, and they have been operated upon by forces, acting wholly in one direction.

The Christian principle. The worldly principle.

With his employers, the case has been just the reverse; and they descend the hill, with their ideas settled at a point as much too low, as their attendant's are too high, and when they attempt a settlement, they find themselves separated by a considerable chasm.

Now A, acting on the worldly principle, immediately falls into a dispute. Though he is himself as much in the wrong as the mountaineer, he sees distinctly the bias of the latter, but is utterly insensible to his own. Hard words and irritated feelings grow worse and worse, until, after some sort of forced adjustment, they separate in anger.

But B, acting on the Christian principle, retreats from the debatable ground. He sees that this debatable ground is a region of uncertainty, between what is the least which they themselves consider to be due, and the greatest which the guide can with any plausibility claim; and that probably the line of justice lies somewhere within it, at a place not easily to be ascertained; and he accordingly retreats from the whole ground. He perceives that he ought not to have left room for such a region of uncertainty, and, as he pays the money pleasantly, he says to himself, "I might have known it would be so. We should have defined our mutual claims beforehand."

This is a very simple case, but it shows the principle on which an immense proportion of contentions and quarrels among men, arise,—just as the little currents of air over a heated iron plate, on the table of the lecturer, exhibit the principles by which all the storms and tempests, which sweep over oceans and continents, are controlled.

It is thus. In the various relations which men sustain to one another, their respective rights cannot always be specified with exactness. There is between what is clearly the right of the first party, on the one side, and what is, on the other, clearly the right of the second,—a sort of intermediate region of doubtful character, so that it is claimed by each, the judgment of each being warped a

little by his feelings. So that in almost all the connections of business, between man and man, their mutual claims overlap each other, as it were, a little, and it is in this disputed and doubtful territory, that almost all the streams of discord and contention take their rise. Now the Christian will avoid this ground. He will generally set up no claim to it. He will endeavor, by wise and prudent forecast and circumspection, to make it as narrow as possible, so as to leave as little room as possible for uncertainty; but when such ground is left, he knows very well that the selfish shrewdness of the one he deals with, will lead him to reach his arm over to the further boundary of it; and, unless in some very peculiar case, he will retreat at once to that boundary, and make no serious attempts to secure any thing, but what is most unquestionably his.

It is a good plan, whenever any subject of difference seems to be coming up, between you and any man with whom you have dealings, for you to go over in imagination, as it were, to his side, and try for a moment to look at it as he does;—not as he *ought* to look at it, but as you know he will,—possessing as he does, the usual feelings of human nature. Now the encroachment on our rights, which men of the world are thus likely to make, will only in general extend over the uncertain territory, which, compared with the whole amount, will, with ordinary discretion, be usually very small, and it is generally best for the Christian to abandon it altogether.

"If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." This may not mean that we are *never*, in *any case*, to contend for our rights, but it certainly does mean that we are very seldom to do it. It teaches that, at least as a general principle, Christians are to be content with what they can get *peaceably*. What we cannot secure without quarrelling for it, we must be willing to lose. If we determine beforehand to act upon this principle, we shall plan accordingly. We shall not

expose ourselves, and in the end shall prosper as much, as the most sturdy and determined vindicator of his rights, who makes it his motto, never to demand more than he is entitled to, and never to take less.

But we seem to be considering the duty of not quarrelling, whereas our subject in this chapter, is not duty, but happiness. We should, therefore, rather be attempting to show the necessity of peace with our fellow men, in order to secure our own enjoyment. Though this scarcely needs to be shown. A man cannot be happy, while engaged in a quarrel. The rising feelings of indignation against injustice, are misery to the heart which feels them,—and so are the whole class of angry, and irritated, and vexatious feelings, about the misconduct or petty faults of others. Never yield to them. Expect often to find men selfish and blind to the interests and rights of others, and make it a part of your regular calculation to experience inconvenience from this source. Then you will not be surprised or vexed, when this inconvenience comes. Accustom yourself to look upon your neighbors' side of the question, as well as your own. Be desirous that he should do well and prosper, as well as you. In all your agreements, be clear and specific beforehand, as you certainly would be, if you knew that every thing left indefinite, would go in the end against you. Where any question arises between you and another, lean towards his rights and interests. With all your efforts in that way, you will not more than overcome your natural bias in favor of your own. If there is any doubt, then, give your neighbor the benefit of it,—any ambiguity, interpret in his favor. This will be the best way to preserve your rights most effectually; but if you do not think so, if you fear this course will lose something of your rights, you must admit that it is the way to preserve your peace and happiness.

2. There was one other point to consider, before bringing this chapter to a close, namely, the extent to which

men mar and destroy their happiness, by struggling and repining against the Providence of God. Whatever happens to you, if it is not the direct consequence of your own personal misconduct, comes through the Providence of God, and you ought to feel that he has sent it. Is your child sick? that sickness comes from his hand. Is your house, which you have earned by slowly accumulating the fruits of your industry for years, burned by the carelessness of a domestic, or the malice of an incendiary. It is the same to you, as if it had been struck by the lightning of heaven; the loss, in either case, comes in the Providence of God, and you should no more make yourself miserable, by angry resentment against the domestic or the incendiary, than against the lightning.

Do you experience a heavy loss in your business, by the fraud or the negligence of a creditor. Bear it patiently and submissively as from God. It *is* from God. If you have done all in your power, by prudent circumspection, to guard against the danger, then you are not yourself responsible for it, and you should not repine, any more than a child should murmur at the loss of a plaything, when his father has sent his brother or sister to take it away.

Many people think they have a right to murmur, and make themselves miserable, at acts of injustice which they suffer from others. They feel as if they ought to submit pleasantly and quietly to those ills, which come more directly through the exercise of Divine Power, as when a ship is lost by a storm at sea, or sudden disease arising from no perceptible cause, attacks them, or when their business and their property is sacrificed by the progress of a pestilence, or unaccountable changes in the times. But when they can trace calamity, in the first instance, to the agency of a fellow man, they are disturbed, and irritated, and vexed, as if God had nothing to do with it whatever. But the agency of God has as much concern in one of these cases, as in the other. He has as much control over the

Joseph's case. Lesson to be learned from it.

actions and feelings of your fellow men, and regulates as certainly the treatment you are to receive from them, as he does the force of winds and storms, the progress of a pestilence, or the track of the lightning. When Joseph was let down in the pit by his brethren, he was as much in God's hands, as was Jonah in the storm at sea. So Jesus Christ when scourged and crucified, bowed with submission to his sorrows, as to sorrows and sufferings brought upon him by his Father's hand.

Take the case of Joseph for instance. Suppose he could have foreseen how his history was to terminate, and what would be the ultimate result of his trials and sufferings, in respect to their influence upon the posterity of his father, and upon those who should read the narrative of them, in the word of God, in all future ages. How would he have felt, when his brothers sold him into bondage, to the wandering sons of Ishmael? Would he have been irritated and vexed, and would he have gone away into captivity, with a heart boiling with rage, at the injustice and cruelty of his brothers? No; he would have felt a calm and happy acquiescence in the will of God. He would have felt himself entirely in the hands of his Father, who would bring ultimate and lasting good out of his temporary sufferings. And so will the Christian always feel, if he feels right. He will carry about with him continually, the conviction that he is, in every respect, in God's hands,—that nothing comes to him but in the providence and as a part of the plan of God towards him,—and while he takes every precaution to guard himself from evil and danger, yet, when it will come, whether it be through the wickedness of man, or more apparently through the direct agency of God, he submits to it calmly and with an unruffled spirit. Unless a man takes this view of the occurrences of human life, his happiness can never be on any sure and solid basis, in such a world as ours.

Perhaps, the most common way in which Christians

struggle against the Providence of God, is, in the case I have alluded to, where petty trouble or serious calamity comes through the agency of man. We forget in such cases, that so far as we ourselves are concerned, the trial comes as really in the providence of God, as in any case whatever. It is remarkable, however, that there is one case of suffering, which most plainly comes from God, and from him alone, and which Christians are very slow to submit to. I mean sickness,—our own sickness, or that of our friends. How few there are who do not in heart strug gle against their Maker, when he comes and places them, or their friends, upon a bed of suffering. But sickness really comes from God. We must admit this, at least in those cases of disease which cannot be traced to imprudences or indulgences of our own. If we feel this, one would think that we should yield to it submissively, and bear it patiently. Suppose you take your child from some work or play, in which he is interested, and ask him to come and sit down by your side, while you speak to him upon some important subject. Instead of giving up the thoughts of his former employment, and listening attentively to what you have to say, he looks eagerly and anxiously away from you, watching his companions, and evidently longing to be restored to them. You reprove him very justly for his inattention, and his evident eagerness to be released from your hold.

But now come with me to this sick chamber. There lies upon that bed, the mother of a family, removed from the scene of her labors and enjoyments, and laid in helpless inaction upon her pillow. Who has placed her there? God. For what? Because he has something to say to her. Is not sickness a providence, that is intended to speak to the soul? But, instead of lying quietly resigned to God's will, and listening patiently to his voice, her heart is filled with eager impatience to be restored to her family. She thinks how many things are going wrong,—how many

interests will suffer,—how much will be neglected, while she lies helpless in her bed. But oh, thou impatient mother, remember, that He who brings sickness, is to be considered as *bringing every evil, which necessarily follows in its train.* If you repine, then, or murmur at any of the inevitable consequences of your removal from the scene of your labors, you are in heart struggling against God. So with the man of business. No matter what inconvenience, or what losses come upon him, in consequence of sickness. He ought not to walk his room with anxious impatience, nor look forth from his window sighing to be free again. He ought to feel that when God shuts him up from his daily duties, that he takes upon himself the responsibility of it. Whatever losses he suffers come from him. It is his duty to be resigned, and to listen patiently to what God has to say to him, in his silent and solitary chamber.

Perhaps the very object, for which the sickness was sent, is to teach you resignation to the divine will. Perhaps God has seen in your conduct, a dissatisfied and repining spirit, awakened by a thousand little circumstances, which are beyond your control, and which you therefore ought to consider as ordered by Providence. Now perhaps God has brought sickness upon you, for the sake of removing this fault. How admirably is it calculated to produce this effect. How irresistibly must a man feel that a *very strong hand* is over him, when he is taken from his sphere, and laid down upon his bed,—all his plans suspended, or destroyed,—and no human power capable of restoring him to activity again. Oh, one would think, if man could learn submission any where, it is here.

The same principles of duty should govern us in witnessing the sickness of a friend; and of all cases, the sickness of a child, is the one against which we are the most likely to struggle. There are thousands of parents professedly Christians, whose lives are imbittered, and whose peace and happiness is destroyed, because they cannot really

trust their children in the hands of God. Every little sickness alarms them,—every precaution, whether suggested by reason or imagination is taken, and the mind is full of restless, unsubmissive fears, as if they were under the dominion of a tyrant. Now there is a certain degree of ordinary prudence and caution to be observed, and in case of sickness, there is medical skill, which to a certain extent, may modify or change results. But after all, these precautions and this aid will go but a very little way. The invasions of disease, especially in children, are far less dependent on circumstances within our control than is often supposed. The development of hereditary tendencies, the mysterious influences of atmospheric changes, and a thousand combinations of causes and circumstances, not to be controlled, produce them; and when they come, all we have to do is quietly and calmly to pursue the course which seems best adapted to promote restoration. As to the responsibility for the result, we throw ourselves on God; and let him do *just as he pleases.*

Suppose, now, there should be a mother, always uneasy and solicitous about her child, when it was in health, or sitting over it, when in sickness, restless and anxious, trying this remedy and that, without reason and without hope, just because she cannot give him up;—suppose, I say, that God should come to the bedside, and say to her, "Anxious mother,—I was taking charge of your child, but since you are so restless and uneasy about it, I will give the case up to you, if you will take it. There is a great question to be decided;—shall that child recover, or die? I was going to decide it in the best way for yourself and him. But since you cannot trust me, you may decide it yourself. Look upon him, then, as he lies there suffering, and then look forward as far as you can into futurity,—see as much as you can of his life here, if you allow him to live; and look forward to eternity,—to *his* eternity and yours. Get all the light you can, and then tell me whether you are really

ready to take the responsibility of deciding the question; whether he shall live or die. Since you are not willing to allow me to decide it, I will leave you to decide it yourself."

What would be the feelings of a mother, if God should thus withdraw from the sick bed of her child, and leave the responsibility of the case in her hands alone. Who would dare to exercise the power, if the power were given, or say to a dying child, "you shall live, and on me shall be the responsibility." Then let us all leave God to decide. Let us be wise, and prudent, and faithful, in all our duties, but never, for a moment, indulge in an anxious thought;—it is rebellion. Let us rather throw ourselves on God. Let us say to him, that we do not know what is best, either for us, or our children, and ask him to do with us *just as he pleases*. Then we shall be at peace at all times,—when disease makes its first attack,—when the critical hours approach, by which the question of life or death is to be decided, and even when the last night of the little patient's suffering has come, and we see the vital powers gradually sinking, in their fearful struggle with death.

Besides, were it not so much pleasanter and happier for us to submit cheerfully to God, it would be the height of folly to do otherwise. Suppose that God has decided that it is best for your child to die,—and has come into your family, and laid it upon its bed, and has admitted a fatal disease into its system, which is busy at its sad work upon the vital powers there. Can you change his purpose, do you think, by restlessness and repining and rebellious anxiety about it? No. That is the very best thing you can do to accelerate the blow. Perhaps your want of submission to God, is the reason why it is sent, and by indulging such a feeling, you only demonstrate more fully the necessity of the moral remedy you fear. It is a moral remedy, and God will never be deterred from administering a medicine on account of the impatience or resistance of the one who needs it. No. The wisest and best thing we can do, when

we see God approaching us with a bitter cup, is calmly and submissively to take it from his hands, and drink it up. If he perceives this feeling, he will administer the draught with so much tender kindness that it will lose half its power.

The sum and substance then, of our directions for securing personal happiness in this world, is this: Make your peace thoroughly with God,—regulate all your worldly affairs, and attend to them industriously and on system,—have no quarrels with men, and submit cheerfully to all the dealings of God. Let any man who is not happy, take hold of his character and habits, and reform them on these principles. Let him do the work thoroughly and honestly, and if then his peace and happiness do not return, it must be that he stands in need of *medical*, not moral, treatment, and I can do no more for him, but to commend him to the care of his physician.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POOR.

"Where there is no *vision*, the people perish."

THERE are a great many persons in the world, whose only idea of doing good, seems to be the act of giving money, or something which money will purchase, to the poor. Pecuniary charity, as a relief for physical suffering, they appear to consider the great work of Christian benevolence. Whereas it is but a very, very small department; and though it is a department which must on no account be neglected, still it is probably one, in which the labors of the philanthropist are most discouraging; and least effectual in producing any ultimate, useful result.

The reason of this will be obvious, upon a little reflection, on the nature and causes of poverty. In America,

and probably in most parts of England, poverty, by which I mean, the absolute want of the necessaries of life, arises in a vast majority of cases, from idleness, mismanagement, or from vice. It is the punishment which Providence has assigned to each of these offences against his laws, and, as in all other cases, you cannot very easily abate the punishment, without increasing the sin. Good character, industry, and prudence, will, in almost any country, under almost any government, and in almost any condition, find a comfortable subsistence. Of course, there are exceptions; exceptions on a great scale, produced by great national calamities, and on a smaller scale, by individual sickness or suffering. There are men, undoubtedly, the utmost efforts of whose feeble powers, will not procure the means of subsistence;—and thousands may be reduced to beggary by a pestilence, or a prevailing famine, or turned out of employment by a change in the arrangements of business,—or reduced to the extreme of hunger and despair in a besieged city. It is not, however, my province here to speak of these. They are beyond the limits of ordinary private Christian charity. They are great emergencies which must be met, each by its own appropriate remedy, which the statesman must devise; or they are, as is more frequently the case, judgments from Heaven, which admit of no remedy, perhaps even no sensible alleviation from the hand of man, but will do their awful work to the full.

These instances are, however, rare; all the ordinary cases of suffering from poverty, are produced from one of the three causes above enumerated,—idleness, mismanagement, or vice; and it is almost impossible to alleviate the consequences without aggravating the cause.

For example, let us look at a very common case. A woman, apparently in the most wretched condition which imagination can conceive, comes up to your door, begging for some money to buy food. She carries a child in he

arms, pale and sickly, but lying quiet and passive; it has too little vitality to cry. The woman is really fatigued and hungry. So she was half an hour ago, and she stopped at a house at a little distance, and perceiving that she was not observed, she stole a pair of shoes, which, instead of converting them to food, she has pawned at a grocery for rum. As to her hunger, she presumed she should find some charitable person to supply her with food. The child is not her own. A guilty and inhuman mother has given it to her. "Given it to her!" you exclaim. "What can have induced her to take such a burden?" Because it helps her to excite sympathy and obtain money. Besides, the little sufferer's wasted and emaciated frame is not heavy; and its pale and sunken countenance, and hollow, languid eye, gains more silver than all that the artful woman herself can say. She has been put into an almshouse once or twice, but has made her escape. She prefers the roving life of a beggar woman, with its liberty, its idleness, and its rum. She generally finds enough good-hearted, but weak philanthropists, to give a sufficient quantity of money, for the only purchase she wishes to make; and others, who will not give her money, will give her food and clothes;—so that the only evil she really fears, is a few hours' interruption to the supply of her cup. Habit has made any barn or shed a comfortable lodging to her;—she has become accustomed, too, to the burden she carries, and she has slung it so dexterously, that it presses but lightly on her back; and when the little sufferer cries, the same potion which intoxicates her, will quiet him. It answers, too, the additional purpose of perpetuating, by its poisoning effect, that pale and sickly countenance, on which his whole value depends. And she reflects that should he live, and become too heavy to be carried, he will be old enough to beg, and soon after to steal;—or, if he should not be an apt scholar, she can leave him by the road-side, towards morning, in some populous village, or upon the city side-walk.

This is the kind of life which she deliberately prefers. Not because it is a happy one. It is a most wretched one. Her days are spent in continual misery. Want often presses her down; hunger gnaws; cold and exposure bring frequent, and severe suffering,—and diseases, brought on by vice, sometimes stupify her senses, and sometimes torture her with the acutest pains. And more than all the rest, a guilty conscience corrodes her heart, and completes her misery, by making her mind as full of sources of suffering, as her body. She does not prefer this life, because she is happy, but because she is wicked, and such a course opens the widest door for the indulgence of every sin.

Now this wretched outcast comes up to your dwelling, in an hour of real suffering from hunger. She wants bread for herself, and milk for her starving child. She does really want it. For a moment, hunger has overpowered a depraved and insatiable thirst; but if you satisfy the one, all you do, is just to restore her to the dominion of the other. As she leaves your house, after having been warmed, and clothed, and fed,—she will pilfer something from the kitchen, if she can, and go away imploring Heaven to bless you, for your goodness; and at the next bar-room, she will exchange the article she has stolen, and the flannel, with which you have wrapped her child, for something she craves, and will have at every sacrifice.

Now, when such a case presents itself, what can you do? Nine-tenths of the benevolent portion of mankind would be deceived, and would profusely relieve such a case of suffering, by money, or something which could be turned into money,—not understanding the case. But suppose you really understand it, what can you do? Will you remonstrate with her? You might as well talk to the idle wind. Will you clothe her child? That clothing is just as good as money to her, at many a haunt of vice: and, besides, were it not so, she would not keep such clothing on. Clothing the child comfortably, would spoil it as an instru-

ment of accomplishing her purpose, and rather than destroy its power of awakening sympathy, by having it comfortable, she would throw your gifts away, over the first wall she passes. Will you turn her away from your door, then, without relief? She is actually suffering with hunger, and the lips of the helpless babe too, are parched with thirst, which that cup of warm milk, standing upon your kitchen-table, would so speedily relieve. No: you *cannot* send her away. Will you, then, supply her immediate and pressing wants, and those of her child, and refrain from giving her any thing which she can pervert? This is exactly her plan, to get from the really benevolent, food and occasional shelter, and from the unthinking liberality of others, or from theft, the means of indulgence in vice. This is exactly her plan, and by sending her away from your door warmed and fed, you do what is exactly calculated to encourage her to go on in her life of sin.

Still, perhaps, you ought to do it. As I shall presently show, we must relieve, if we can, actual physical suffering, no matter where it is found, or who is its cause. I detail this case, thus particularly, to show how many, and how great are the difficulties, which beset the whole subject of pecuniary charity to the poor. Perhaps my readers, especially those not much acquainted with the world, may think that this must be a very extraordinary case, altogether unusual, and, consequently, one not to be safely used as a guide to principles. The case would be a striking one, I admit, but not strange and unusual in its character. It illustrates strongly, but fairly, I believe, the general character of wretched poverty, in almost all civilized communities; and the difficulties so obvious in this one detached case, are substantially the difficulties which have always perplexed the most enlightened philanthropists, in respect to the whole subject of pecuniary aid to the poor. Their poverty, their want, their hunger, their cold, their nakedness, are *symptoms*, and symptoms only; and a system of

Treating symptoms. Another scene.

direct effort to relieve these, is what the medical profession call treating symptoms,—a course which must sometimes be pursued, but which is very far, usually, from having any tendency to promote a radical cure of the disease.

We will present one more case, which gives us a view of the same state of things, in, however, a little different aspect.

In the back apartment of a miserable cellar, in a crowded street of New York, lives a collection of human beings: for it would be wrong, to call such a community a family. There is a mother there, it is true, but all the other relations of life are obliterated and confounded. During the day,—a cold January day —the miserable hole exhibits a scene of riot and noise, of oaths and imprecations,—now of wild unearthly mirth, and now of malicious rage;—such a scene, as it would do too much violence to the feelings to describe. Their means of vicious indulgence are nearly exhausted, and to replenish them, the mother sends out her child,—choosing the youngest and sickliest of the group,—to stand upon the cold side-walk, and beg of the passing stranger. "Say," says the unnatural mother, "that your father is dead, and your mother is sick, and you want some money for medicine."

The child will not go. She has no objection to the falsehood, or to the dishonesty, but she is not inclined to obey. Then follows a scene of passionate, furious contention, between an angry mother and a wilful and obstinate child;—for, from the first moment of her existence, that immortal mind has been trained up, by measures and influences most admirably adapted to produce their effect, to falsehood, obstinacy, passion, and every sin.

Superior strength conquers, and the weak and trembling child, paler than usual with anger, finds herself ejected by force into the cold street, the bleak wind driving upon her uncovered head, and blowing the snow into her exposed, half-naked bosom Do you think she feels it, or heeds it?

No: she is hardened to physical suffering, and her whole soul is absorbed by the tumultuary feelings of passion within.

She walks along sobbing with vexation, determined still not to submit to her tyrant's commands, and yet knowing that she must suffer cold and hunger many hours, unless she can carry home the fruits of deception. She wanders instinctively on, until she reaches a street, where she might make application with some hope of success, and then, almost instinctively, accosts the first well-dressed stranger who passes by. He shakes his head at her and walks on.

A small boy, smaller and weaker than herself, approaches. He is returning from the grocer's at the corner, where he has been to buy some bread, and he brings back the change in his hand. It was but a step from his home, and his mother thought she would trust him, though the wind was cold. Our little beggar sees a shorter way to gain her end. She seizes his arm, and with a dexterity, which shows that this is not her first lesson, she wrests the small silver and copper coins from the little messenger's hand, and darts off round the corner. The boy screams aloud, as he lies crying upon the snowy pavement, where the violence of the assault has thrown him. The passengers turn their heads as they pass, and one, with more feeling for the sorrows of childhood than the rest, stops to help him up, and to ask what is the matter. But sobs and tears are very *general* in their meaning, and the poor boy has no other language at command. In the meantime the thief is far away.

Holding her money tenaciously in her little hand, she walks along, till, in a little sunny nook in a back yard, surrounded by a high wall, she finds some children, wretched as herself, trying to play. Though the water drops slowly from the icicles above them, it is yet cold: but it is a change of miseries to sit here for a time. She joins them and spends an hour, that she may not return too soon.

For she knows that if her mother should understand by what good fortune her supply was so easily obtained, she would exact a double task. The increasing chill, at length, drives her home, but it is too soon. Her mother seeing silver, knows that she has taken some more expeditious mode than begging,—and snatching her booty from her hands, she drives her out again with reproaches and blows.

The child returns to her post, stands chilled and shivering in the corner of the streets, and at length gains the ear of a man, who can feel for human suffering, and tells him with an artful air of artlessness, that her father is dead, and her mother very sick, and begs him to give her a little money for medicine.

Now what can money do in such a case as this? Suppose that the benevolent man, who listens to the tale, is the wealthiest man on earth; what can he do with wealth alone that will touch such misery as this. And this is the nature of almost the whole of that great mass of physical wretchedness, which has been for a century accumulating in England and America. This case may be a strong one, but it is true to the fact. The great truth, which it illustrates, is one which should affect all our plans for doing good, or rather the whole system of operations, which we attempt to carry into effect. Sin and misery are almost inextricably mingled in the cup of human wo. There is destitution of comfort and depravity of heart, and they both exist together. Each perpetuates the other, and any system which aims at supplying the wants, while it leaves the depravity, is only adding new fuel to the fires of these earthly hells. We do not present these views, unquestionably true as they are, to blunt the sympathies of the heart, or to lead men to turn a deaf ear to the cry of suffering poverty, on the ground that its sufferings are all deserved. It is true, indeed, that they are too often deserved, but this is a consideration which should never lead us to disregard them. The only way in which these unquestionable facts should influ

ence us, is to lead us to look carefully, at what is to be the ultimate tendency and effect of our measures of relief. In fact, there are two reasons, why every benevolent mind, should be made clearly to understand the real state of the case, in respect to the subject we are treating. The first is, that they may be thoroughly convinced, that the only way of doing any real, and substantial, and lasting good to the human family, is by the improvement of character. Character is every thing. Let this be right, and honesty, industry, and prudence will root out want and wretchedness from every part of the earth. But leave character unchanged, and human want and wo are a mighty gulf, which will swallow up all that the benevolence of the whole world can throw in, and then be wider and darker, and more awful than before. And the way to improve character is to bid God speed every where, to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the only means, which has ever been found adequate to the work, of subduing human passions, and securing to a community the blessings of comfort and peace. Bring men back to God,—show them that their aggravated sins may all be forgiven, enkindle within them the hopes of a happy immortality, and let them see in the great Mediator between God and man, a guide, and a companion, and a sympathizing friend to them, in all their sorrows and cares, and in the vast majority of cases, you need have no more fear of cold and hunger and nakedness,—you will find no more broken-hearted wives or starved children.

The second object we have had in view, in presenting this view of the subject, is, to impress our readers with a sense of the importance of their understanding what they do, and what is the real tendency and effect of their measures, whenever they do act directly in the relief of present suffering. They must understand that it is only alleviating symptoms after all, while the real disease, rages with unabated power. There are some exceptions, but they are much fewer than the inexperienced would generally sup-

pose; and even when we are aware of the general rule, our hearts are very prone to make the case, which is for the moment appealing to it, one of the exceptions. There is a sort of instinctive feeling, that the being whom we see suffering before us must be innocent. Pity is cousin to love, and love to moral approbation; and where the first comes in by right, the last is very likely to intrude.

Those whose benevolence is based on sentimental feeling alone, are in special danger from such delusions, and will often do injury, where they were fondly hoping to do good. You visit a wretched house, perhaps, and find a woman there, who tells you a piteous story about her sufferings, from the neglect and the wrongs endured from an intemperate husband. Her story is plausible, and how much more readily will a feeling heart, in observing the unequivocal proofs of wretchedness around, believe than question her story. And, then, if the understanding should coolly suggest that character generally receives its direction in accordance with the circumstances under which it is formed, and that the abode of vice is not the place where you would naturally expect to find a virtuous woman;—and consequently that, though this *may* be an exception, you ought to be cautious in admitting it to be such, without evidence adequate to the case;—I say, if the understanding coldly suggests these thoughts, we strive to banish them as if they were unjust and cruel. It is a case where we are in special danger of being led, by the heart, astray.

The views here given, do not apply to all the cases of suffering poverty, which the Christian will meet. There is virtuous poverty, though it is rare. The industrious and frugal workman is kept for years on the verge of want by his feeble health, and his increasing family, and sinks at last under the burden which he can carry no longer. The virtuous wife, too, is deprived of her earnings by the brutality of her husband,—and herself and her children suffer all the bitterness of want, that the depraved and insatiable

These exceptions rare. First direction.

appetites of the husband and father may be supplied. The orphan child, too, is often, very often, left friendless and alone,—to be saved by Christian charity, or else to go to utter ruin. I should be sorry, indeed, if any individuals of these classes, should read the remarks in this chapter, and imagine that they could be intended to have any bearing upon them. If there is any moral spectacle, which can make the heart bleed, and bring tears of compassion into the eye, it is to see a broken-hearted wife and mother, toiling in vain to procure food and clothing for her defenceless children, and to shelter them from exposure to vice and ruin, while their insane and brutal father is raving in the streets, with flushed cheeks, and glazed eyes, and muttering voice, during the day, and turning his home at night into a scene of terror and despair. And then, to think, that for such ills, there is and there can be no earthly remedy. Our sympathy, our aid, our encouragement may give a little alleviation; it is, however, but little after all. The bitter cup we cannot sweeten nor take away.

These cases, however, much as every Christian philanthropist will feel for them, he will find comparatively rare. They are exceptions to the general rule, that want is ordinarily the punishment of idleness, improvidence, or vice. Still, to relieve it, is an important part of our duty, and we shall devote the remainder of this chapter to some brief rules and cautions, by which we ought to be guided in discharging it.

1. The distress *must be relieved* if possible. Whatever doubts and difficulties there may be, about making formal and systematic preparations for taking care of the poor, and however justly the sufferings of the poor may generally be considered as the result of their own improvidence and vice, yet, when real distress actually comes, we must immediately do all in our power to relieve it. No matter whether the sufferer is innocent or guilty. No matter whether he has brought calamity upon his head, or is suffering ills

which no foresight could have avoided. It is enough that he is suffering, and that we have power to relieve him.

In fact, in some points of view, suffering vice is a greater object of compassion than suffering virtue. In the former case, there is nothing to alleviate,—nothing to sustain or console; but the heart is overwhelmed with the sorrows and sufferings which press upon it from without, and yet finds nothing but gloom and desolation within. For a man to find misery before and around him, staring upon him, in the ruins of what was once a happy home, driving his wife to despair, and starving his children,—and then to feel that it is all the result of his own folly and sin, must be wretchedness indeed. If we can relieve it, it must be relieved. The Savior has set us the example. We must stop the pain, and then, by the strongest moral means which we can bring to bear upon his heart, we must bid the sufferer sin no more.

We may, therefore, lay it down as one simple and universal rule, that when we find suffering,—real, unquestionable suffering,—we have no doubts and queries to raise about the character or the desert of the sufferer. Whenever and wherever we find it,—no matter what is its cause, or who is its victim,—we must relieve it if we can.

2. We must take care that we correctly understand the case: so that we may know how great the real suffering is. In this respect we must guard against two dangers. First, being deceived by the sufferer, and, secondly, deceiving ourselves.

First. No persons, excepting those who have had a great deal of experience, and, together with it, a great deal of knowledge of human nature, and of shrewdness in understanding its movements, can form any conception of the extent to which the Benevolence of Feeling is duped in this world. The Benevolence of Principle is not so easily deceived That there must be, from the very nature of the case, such deception, any one will see by a moment's

thought. The wretched and destitute in this world are, in a vast majority of cases, the depraved and abandoned in character. It may seem harsh to say it, but every one who has had any opportunity for judging knows it is true. Virtue suffering real want, is seldom to be found excepting in poetry and fiction. It is in this way, that this becomes true, either it is vice which makes a man wretched, and brings him down from the position he might have occupied, or else, if the inevitable circumstances of his lot bring him to a condition of wretchedness, they do, at the same time, as the world now goes on, expose him to influences which almost inevitably make him depraved. When therefore we see an object of misery coming to us for relief, it is very unsafe for us to believe, too readily, that he is an honest man.

Still, as I have said under the preceding head, this is no reason why he should not be relieved, if he is really a sufferer. It is no reason why we should pronounce him a bad man, or say any thing or do any thing to lead him to suppose that we consider him so. It is only a reason why we should be *on our guard*. In fact we ought not to consider *him*, as an individual, bad. We ought not to decide the question at all, till we have evidence which applies to the particular case. Our feeling should be, that the question whether the applicant before us is a good man or a bad man is yet undecided, but that probably, when we come to have evidence on the point, we shall find that it will not be in his favor, and that therefore we ought to be on our guard.

A volume might be filled with details of the contrivances of artful men and women, and of children taught all the practices of depravity at an early age, to feign wretchedness, and at the same time to assume the semblance of virtue. They will put forward into display every sign and indication or suffering they can think of. They inure themselves to hardships that they may exhibit themselves

in the endurance of them. They know too, generally, that it is from Christians alone that the suffering have much ground of hope, and they soon learn the language of seriousness, or of piety itself, that they may awaken a moral interest in their behalf in the hearts of Christian benefactors. They can talk of their sorrows, their trials, their temptations, their hard struggles with the ills of their lot, and by means of the confidence which the language of piety obtains for them in the hearts of others, they procure the means and the stimulants which carry them on with redoubled rapidity in the career of depravity. This may seem severe. The benevolence of sentiment and feeling will perhaps exclaim against it; but the most experienced and the most indefatigable friend of the suffering poor, will testify that it is true. And what must we do? Relieve the suffering if you can, and hear attentively the story But suspect all mere professions of piety, or even of a dawning interest in it, and do not take appearances as evidence of the real extent of the suffering. Be, in a word, on your guard. But never turn a deaf ear to complaints because you suspect them to be insincere, or refuse to relieve suffering because you believe it deserved. No Vengeance is not ours. The more intimately sin and suffering are mingled in a cup of misery, the louder is the call to the Christian to come immediately with relief. For here both the enemies against which he is contending may be encountered together. The considerations which we have presented, should therefore have influence only in leading us to be careful that we ascertain correctly what the real nature and extent of the suffering really is, and not to postpone or to neglect relieving it when it is ascertained.

Secondly, we are in great danger of deceiving ourselves in respect to the amount of suffering we witness. We consider how much we should suffer if we were in the place of those whom we pity, and measure the extent of

their pain by our susceptibilities. The body becomes inured to hardships to a degree which is surprising. The cold, the abstinence, the exposure which would destroy one, will be borne by another without any serious suffering. A stage-driver will sit upon his box all day, without seeing, or wishing to see a fire; driving in an atmosphere of piercing cold, so intense that the passengers within, though protected from the air and muffled in cloaks and furs, can scarcely bear its extreme inclemency while they are passing from one blazing tavern-fire to another. How often, too, have we seen, as we have been hurrying along the streets to our home, in a bleak wintry day, a group of boys with thin clothing, open bosoms, and bare hands, amusing themselves with their coasting, or their snow-forts, hour after hour. Many a time does the tender mother pity her poor child, playing in the cold, when it is all enjoyment to him It is so with abstinence from food. The human constitution adapts itself with wonderful readiness and certainty to its conditions, and learns to do and to bear without pain, what it is often compelled to do and to bear. Now let no reader say that these remarks are intended to deny that the poor suffer from hunger and cold. They do suffer often and intensely—more intensely than the well-clothed and well-fed dispenser of charity can conceive. Still they often do not suffer, where there is every appearance of suffering; that is, we see that we should suffer in their place, and we think that they must suffer too. We ought to be aware of this; for to enable us to act wisely and judiciously, the first thing is to understand correctly the case in respect to which we are going to act.

3. When we have found, thus, a case of real suffering, and have taken those precautions which the nature of the case will admit for correctly understanding it, we ought to proceed soberly and cautiously in measures for relief. If your feelings become deeply interested in the case,—and if your benevolence is rather that of feeling than of

principle, they will be very likely to become so, by the influence of little circumstances which may give the charm of sentiment or romance to the affair,—you may make a great exertion, you may enlist the feelings and efforts of your acquaintance, and you may, by your various plans, carry your measures for relief altogether beyond just bounds. It is not that you will be in danger of producing too much happiness, but that by overdoing your part here, you may aggravate, in the end, the suffering you intended to relieve. How you will be in danger of doing this, will appear more clearly from the cautions given in the two following heads.

4. In all your efforts to promote the good of the poor, endeavor to encourage, and bring out, and aid their own efforts, not to supply the place of them by your charity. Your principle should be, not to *carry* them, but to help them walk, themselves. Aid them in their own plans, and aid them too as little as possible, consistently with relieving from actual suffering. If, for instance, a poor woman's infant child is suffering for clothing, do not make a full supply of such clothing as you would want for your own child, and then send it in to her to surprise and gladden her by the unexpected profusion. By doing so, you will indeed produce a momentary feeling of surprise, and perhaps gratitude; but you go so far beyond what her own exertions could hope to reach, that she is discouraged rather than aided, in respect to her own exertions for the future. She despises the coarse and less comfortable supplies which she can herself procure, and by spoiling, in her view, the rewards of her own industry, that industry is discouraged and depressed. She sinks into idleness, waiting and hoping for another gift.

On the other hand, when you find one struggling with poverty, aid those struggles. Ask them what they want, what they are trying to obtain, and aid them just as much as is necessary to enable them to obtain what they want,

and to obtain it in their own way. Instead of sending them a new bed, give them aid in getting the old one fixed and mended. Instead of moving them to another house because you think you could not be contented in theirs, show them how they can make their present cabin tidy and comfortable. In a word, instead of coming in at once with a profusion of new comforts and supplies, to produce a sudden emotion of wonder and joy, help them a little,—just as much as is necessary, — in going on in their own way, except, of course, so far as their own way is positively wrong. Thus by aiding them in their own labors and plans, you encourage and stimulate effort, and make the little aid you render of lasting benefit.

5. If you do too much for any one individual who is suffering, you will excite the jealousy and envy of the rest. Thus you will cut off the poor from the sympathy and aid of one another, which is, after all, of more value to them than the more liberal charities of the rich. Among the lowest and most degraded classes there are all varieties of condition. There are gradations of rank, of influence, and property, as decided as in a royal court. A disposition to relieve and help one another exists, too, among them. Whenever any case of extraordinary suffering occurs, the neighbors flock around the scene, partly from real genuine compassion, and partly from that mysterious principle in human nature, the love of tragic excitement, which other classes gratify by fiction, they by reality.

Suppose now in the course of your walks of charity you come to a wretched habitation, half under ground, where a woman is lying sick. Her room, if room it may be called, seems to you, as you enter it, entirely destitute of every comfort. The sufferer is alone when you come in, but she is by no means deserted. Her poor neighbors, as you would call them,—though as their daily labors bring them all they want, they are very far from calling themselves poor,—have come in to help her. One has lent her a

blanket. Another brought in that morning some wood to make a fire for preparing her some food, and then extinguished it as no longer necessary when the food was prepared. The room looks cheerless and uncomfortable to you, but the patient is not cold, any more than you yourself are cold, when sleeping in an unwarmed chamber in a night in January. Other neighbors come in during the day, from time to time, to talk a little with the patient and cheer her heart. Thus all her real wants are supplied. The appearances of suffering which strike you as you enter, are only the general circumstances of her condition, to which she has always been accustomed, and which produce no suffering, and awaken no feeling of discontent; and she is in fact, only an object of compassion, just as all other persons are who are sick, whatever may be the aspect of the chamber where they are confined.

The wise course now, in such a case is, plainly, not to come with a profusion of aid, so as to break in upon and derange the operations of that neighborhood. Just encourage, and aid, and help forward those operations. Sit a few minutes by the bedside, and tell the patient you are glad she has so many comforts, and that her neighbors are so kind to her. Inquire if there is any thing in addition to what they do for her, that she wants. If there is, supply her as much as possible through them. Aid one a little in obtaining wood when it is really wanted. Ask another whether a physician is necessary, and if so, what one is generally employed in that neighborhood, and help them to obtain him. Thus strengthen and encourage, and aid the sympathy and charity which is at hand, and on which the sufferer must after all mainly rely.

Or suppose you take the other course. Regardless of what has been done and is doing for her, you come and break suddenly in upon the system of kind attentions which neighbors and friends had arranged, and by the comparatively profuse supplies which you can easily render, you

make all that they had done, appear insignificant and worthless. Soon after your visit, one neighbor comes in and finds what she would call a rich counterpane upon the bed and the coarse blanket which she had made considerable effort and sacrifice to lend to the patient, thrown aside. Another enters and sees a great blazing fire upon the hearth,—the little stock of wood which she had contributed, and which she had been frugally using, all consumed, and its place supplied by your extravagant contribution. They see immediately that the case is taken out of their hands. They were helping the poor traveller along the rough road of life, but you have interfered and taken her into your carriage, and they cannot keep up with you. They are discouraged, and give up their neighbor in despair of helping her any more. The feeling is worse than that of despair. They will, in nine cases out of ten, look with envy and jealousy upon your profuse benefactions, and their compassion for their suffering neighbor will be turned to dislike, by your raising her, for the moment, above themselves. It will be but for a moment, for, in a short time you find some other object of compassion and charity, and you gradually abandon this one, having by the indiscreet profusion of your aid, deprived her of her greatest stay and support.

A case has occurred within my knowledge, since this chapter was commenced, which finely illustrates this subject. A benevolent physician was called to prescribe for a sick woman in the cabin of an Irish laborer upon a Massachusetts railroad. It was in the depth of winter, the thermometer ranging from zero to twenty degrees below. The rude cabin was made of posts driven into the ground, covered with boards of rough sides and untrimmed edges. Similar boards, rudely overlapping each other, constituted the roof. The house was banked up upon the outside with turf and stones, for several feet; but above, the cold winds of the winter, whistled through the innumerable crevices

of so rude a structure. Within, there was but one apartment; a fire burned in a corner, the fireplace being a little more than the angle of the wall, from which the smoke ascended through a chimney of loose stones, topped out, as the masons say, with a couple of empty flour barrels. Near the entrance, two short posts were driven into the turf,—for the natural surface of the ground was the only floor,—and cross-pieces nailed from one of them to the other and from each to the wall, constituted the bedstead A covering of boards answered instead of cord or sacking. The door, if it may be called a door, was near; for in order to leave as much room as possible for the numerous occupants of the cabin, the bedstead had been built, though probably not in anticipation of sickness, as far as possible from the fire.

One cold morning, the physician came to pay his last visit, as his patient was decidedly convalescent. He found as usual, the neighbors around the bed, in a wintry atmosphere utterly unaffected by the fire, in the remote corner of the room. Patient and visiters were however all talking merrily together, amusing themselves with an infant child lying by the mother's side. After making the customary inquiries, and then leaving the general directions and good wishes which usually attend the last visit to convalescence, he was about going away, when one of the visiters, who lived in just such a cabin, walked upon just such a floor, and slept upon just such a bed,—if indeed she ever, except in sickness, enjoyed the luxury of any bed at all,—after some whispering consultation with the others, took him to one side to plead for a *moderate charge in the way of fee;* for, as she said gravely, "this woman and her husband are rather poor, and have hard work to get along!"

Now the point I have in view, in introducing this scene to the reader's attention, is just to make this remark at the close of it, namely, that the benevolence of blind feeling

would have refused a fee altogether in this case, and have left, besides, some extravagant donation in money, or in something else. But a man, benevolent on principle,—wise and circumspect, would have done just as the physician did, in this case, suffer himself to be persuaded to take only a partial fee, and go away with that,—leaving the patient to feel that she was independent, not living upon charity, and the neighbors to see that through their friendly intervention, they had done their friend a real service, by diminishing the charges of her sickness. Fifty dollars could not be expended upon such a family and neighborhood, in a way to do more good among them, than that effected by the simple influence of the proper course in such a case as this. So much more important is it to encourage the ignorant classes to help themselves and one another, than to lead them to lean upon the charity of the wealthy.

The last direction we have to give, is, to be cautious in regard to all public, known, established organizations for the relief of the poor. I do not say oppose them nor refuse to aid them, but watch them. They who have been most intimately acquainted with the operation of all systematic and well known charities, unite in saying that though they relieve a great deal of actual want which could not have been avoided, yet that the great general result which is produced by them is to lead the mass of the poor, i. e. of the idle, the dissipated, and the vicious, to calculate upon their aid, as a part of their regular resources;—and to enable them to carry to a still farther point, their idleness, dissipation, and vice, without being called to account by that stern master, hunger. There is no doubt that the public poor, and the beneficiaries of private charitable associations, both in England and America, calculate in many instances almost as much upon their winter's aid, as a bank stock-holder does upon his dividend,—and they make as regular an allowance for it, in the industry and economy

they practice in the working season. We do not see this,—we hardly believe it when it is proved,—so strong is that mysterious delusion by which we always connect the idea of innocence with that of suffering. But the influence of all well-known and public arrangements for distributing to the necessities of the able-bodied poor, is unquestionably of this sort, and they demand the most careful attention. They may be, in fact, sometimes needed. But they ought not to be needed, in any country. There must be something wrong in the state of society, where they are demanded, and statesmen and philanthropists should set themselves at work to discover and correct this wrong, rather than vainly to attempt to remove the symptomatic sufferings which come from it.

If in any community there are large masses of the population who cannot by their labors procure their support, it is plain that this must be owing to something wrong in the constitution and condition of society there; for the products of the general industry are amply sufficient for the general support. There can be no question that the cultivated portions of the earth, do or might produce, a very plentiful supply, both of food and clothing, for all the inhabitants. If, therefore, any go unsupplied, it must be either that they cannot labor to advantage, or that they are, by faulty institutions or customs, deprived of their just and fair reward. Both of these two causes operate.

The ignorant cannot work to advantage, because in most civilized communities at the present day, there is too much ignorant labor to supply the demand. To carry forward the operations of society, by which food and clothing are produced, manufactured, transported, and exchanged, there is demanded a certain amount of intelligence, a certain amount of inventive power, a certain amount of manual dexterity, and a certain amount of mere labor. If there is an undue supply of either of these, the reward for that which is in excess, must sink; for the fair proportion

of the product of the common industry will in effect fall to each class, and must be divided among them; and where the claimants are numerous, the dividend must be small. Now the market for *labor*, almost throughout the civilized world, is glutted, while the demand for skill and intelligence is but moderately supplied. The reason is, that vast numbers have let themselves sink by their vices to ignorance and degradation, where they can do nothing but labor; and society have allowed the mighty mass to accumulate, by not making proper efforts to save their children. While thus the supply of mere muscular force nas been increasing, the demand has been diminishing, for the progress of civilization is continually finding ways of accomplishing by the intelligence and skill of the few, what was before effected by the blind labor of the many. This double influence has gone on until at length, in England, while the means of comfort and happiness among the upper classes of society, are as abundant as they are in any part of the world, there are far more than enough of the ignorant and degraded, who can do nothing but labor, to do all the labor there is to be done. The consequence is, their pay is reduced to the very lowest extreme, through a competition sharpened by hunger, and urged on by despair; and still there are hundreds of thousands who must be fed by the public or starve. Common sense points out the remedy. Enlightening and educating them, and their children, so as to raise a portion of them from the ranks of mere blind, ignorant laborers, where they are not wanted, to spheres of action where they can sustain themselves, and promote the general welfare by intelligence and skill.

In a word, poverty and suffering in this world are generally only the symptoms of ignorance and sin. Let us mitigate the symptoms where they are severe. It is our imperious duty to do so. But the great object to be accomplished is to cure the disease.

CHAPTER V.

PROMOTION OF PERSONAL PIETY.

"He that converteth the sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

It seems thus, from what we have said in the last chapter, that we cannot sunder the connection between sin and suffering; and there is a little additional light thrown upon our duty in respect to the way to do good in this world, by the circumstance that God who can, *will* not. He might easily and at once, put a final end to all the miseries which men are every where bringing upon themselves by their sins. How readily might he, by a word, restore every broken constitution,—and bring back to prosperity every wretched and ruined family,—and heal every corroding and cankering disease,—and quiet the agitations of remorse and despair. But he will not. He has chosen to connect by the most fixed and steady laws, suffering with sin, and it is remarkable how exclusively all his plans of doing good to men go, for their object, towards removing the cause, and not towards disturbing this established connection between cause and consequence. He has determined that the way of transgression must be hard. If man breaks his laws and lives in sin, he will not relieve him of the penalties, and he puts it utterly out of our power to afford any effectual relief. Thus he cuts off from man all hope of happiness except from the abandonment of sin.

There is thus a great difference between human philanthropy and divine philanthropy in their way of working. Men are always trying to stop suffering directly. God's plans are always aimed against sin. God sends prophets and preachers to teach. He publishes his commands

He makes known his threatenings. He displays conspicuously on this theatre the moral example of his Son. He gives the innocent victim to death, to make atonement for our sins, and by his Spirit gently draws the heart to penitence and submission. Man, on the other hand, establishes the public infirmary,—gives money to the vicious beggar,—provides publicly for the poor,—and builds the foundling hospital. Let no one understand me to say that these things are wrong. Some are undoubtedly right, and others may be wrong. It is most plainly our duty to do the little we can to alleviate the sorrows and sufferings of humanity, even if these sorrows are caused by sin. All we mean here to say is that we are prone, very prone to turn our attention too exclusively to such efforts, which must be extremely limited in their success, and which often create far more misery than they relieve. The great work of benevolence in this world, is the work of co-operating with God in attempting to REDEEM THE HUMAN RACE FROM ITS SINS.

The young readers, for whom this book is principally intended, will doubtless feel somewhat surprised and perhaps a little disappointed at this view of the case. In early life we look upon the relief of bodily suffering as the great way of doing good, and we regard money as the most powerful and ready means of effecting it. If we feel any benevolent desires, they flow out in this channel, and we look forward with eager interest to the time when we shall possess means of our own for the accomplishment of such plans. If there are such among our readers, they will feel disappointed and discouraged by the representations we made in the last chapter. But the representations, though discouraging, are true. The more you reflect upon it, the more you will be satisfied, that God has so arranged the circumstances of human life, and so intimately and inextricably intertwined moral and physical evil, that the latter admits of no separate remedy.

The only way to do real and permanent good.

If then you wish to devote your life to the work of doing good, you must devote it to a warfare against sin. You can do nothing effectual in any other way. You may as well attempt to hold back the tides of the ocean, or to exclude insects from the forest, or clouds from the sky, as to fence off hunger, and loathsome disease, and squalid misery, from a community filled with sin. On the other hand, make the most wretched outcast in the world, whose sufferings are caused by his vice, a Christian, and the work is done. No matter for your alms, his faith will save him. Regeneration cuts up the root of wretchedness, and every bitter fruit will soon disappear. The ragged, hungry, diseased and miserable vagabond, will soon be found clothed and in his right mind. Temperance and purity will restore his health, and industry and frugality will supply every need;—and the wretched suppliant for relief which he never could receive, will become the possessor of independent happiness, and the dispenser of enjoyment to the little circle around him.

As we have already remarked, this should not prevent our doing the little we can to give temporary relief to the sorrows and sufferings of men. We must not leave even guilt to bear its burdens, with the stern reproach that it deserves them all. We must feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the sick, and do them all the good in our power; No person who reads the precepts or observes the example of Jesus Christ, can possibly doubt this. All we mean to inculcate by the foregoing remarks, is, that after we have done all that we can in this way, we have in fact, done comparatively nothing. The great source of the difficulty remains untouched, and we accomplish nothing effectual or permanent for the good of man, except so far as we promote his salvation from sin.

We come now, therefore, to consider the great means by which this is to be done.

Our Savior's plan for the extension of Christianity in the world, was, that the spirit of piety should spread from heart to heart, by a sort of moral contagion. There was provision made, it is true, for argument to convince, and instruction to enlighten, and threatenings to awe mankind; but from the whole tenor of the Savior's preaching, and his whole course of conduct, it is plain that he relied mostly upon that practical manifestation of the power of religion, which he himself and his disciples were to make to men. The various metaphors he used all indicate how much he expected from the moral influence of a bright christian example. It is surprising what an influence man has over man, by the mere contagion of moral feeling. Such is human nature, that the mere existence and exhibition of a feeling, right or wrong, in one heart awakens its like in the hearts that are around it. A good sentiment or a bad one is spread among men by the simple expression of it, more than by the reasoning by which it is supported. Men catch the spirit of it, and their hearts vibrate in unison, as one cord, untouched, echoes back the musical tone that is sounded by another.

Few persons understand how great this influence is, which heart has over heart by a sort of sympathy. And yet you can easily see, by many simple experiments, how much stronger it is than the power of cold argument, or the influence of a calculation on rewards or punishments to come. We can, as usual with moral experiments, test it most easily with a child. Suppose his mother is sick in her bed-room, and you wish him to be quiet and still, that she may rest; or rather, you do not merely wish to produce silence mechanically, but you wish to awaken such a feeling of love and interest and sympathy for his mother, that he shall take pleasure in being still. Now you may try two methods. First, argument and persuasion; you may call him to your side and tell him how sick his mother is, —how kind she has always been to him when he was sick,

—how greatly noise disturbs her, and how clearly it is his duty to avoid increasing her sickness or her suffering. You may, perhaps, by such a conversation, produce a slight momentary impression; but you will more probably find by his restlessness and his wandering looks, that your labor is in vain.

Now try the power of moral sympathy. Take your little pupil by the hand, and say to him, "Come—we will go and see mother." As you lead him by slow steps, up the staircase, talk thus. You will observe that it is not reasoning or persuasion, but only an *audible expression* of your own feelings, intended to awaken, by the power of sympathy, similar feelings in him.

"Poor mother! I am sorry she is sick. We will walk very carefully and softly, so as not to disturb her. I will open the door very gently. There,"—(in a very gentle and subdued tone;)—"she will hardly know we are coming. We will not disturb poor mother. I hope she will get well; we will be kind to her and be still, so that she may soon get well."

They who have observed the character and feelings of the human heart, as exhibited in childhood, will understand how readily the little pupil as he is walking up the stairs, will catch the spirit exhibited so near him. His loud step will be hushed into the most cautious tread. His boisterous voice will subside to a low murmuring sound, and he will stand, at last, by his mother's bed-side, full, for the moment at least, of the feelings of love, and compassion, and interest, which you wished to awaken. You have awakened them simply by the power of moral sympathy. You brought his heart near to yours, and kindled it by the flame that was there.

It is so with men as well as with children. They catch the spirit of moral feeling from one another, to an extent of which the great mass of mankind have a very inadequate conception. It is so too, with almost every kind of feeling.

Let a father come home among his terrified children, in a thunder storm, and without his saying a word, his look of calm composure, and his quiet air will reassure them all It will do far more than words. Nay, argument and reasoning would only interfere with its effect. Far the wisest course, in such a case, would be to say not a word about safety; but while talking of other things, to depend upon the children's catching the spirit of composure. Fear will spread thus, too, as well as courage. On the field of battle when a few are thoroughly terrified, it is a most desperate effort only, which can prevent universal panic and flight. It is not that the danger is greater, or that it is better understood;—but that human hearts, when together, tend strongly to beat in unison, and where some go wrong, they draw on others to ruin with them, by this mysterious contagion.

The contest which is going on in the world, between good and evil, is a contest of feeling, more than one of argument. Bad principles and bad passions spread by the direct action of heart upon heart, and good principles, and benevolent and holy emotions, appeal in the same way to the consciences of men, with far greater power than any other moral causes. This is the reason why our Savior laid so much stress upon the power and influence of christian example. His followers were to be the *light* of the world. They were to be the *salt*, which purifies and saves by its presence, and its direct and salutary action. They were to be the *leaven*, which communicates its own properties to the mass which surrounds it, by the simple influence of its touch. In many ways, Jesus Christ plainly showed how much he expected would be accomplished by the moral power of the mere presence and manifestations of piety in the midst of a world lying in sin.

He ordained many other modes of exerting influence to spread his kingdom. But they all depended for their success, in a great measure, on being connected with this.

The gospel was to be preached every where, but its practical effects upon the lives of those who embraced it, were to give power to this preaching. In fact, it was our Savior's character which gave their immense effect to his instructions; and Paul, if he had been a selfish, worldly man, might have declaimed against sin in Jerusalem, or Athens, or Rome, for half a century in vain. The rapid progress of true religion in early times, was undoubtedly owing, in a great measure, to the lofty standard of practical piety, by which the instructions of public preaching were enforced. The pulse of ardent love to God, and true benevolence to man, beat high and strong in the hearts of the early Christians; and the *warm* fire is the one which spreads easily.

It has been the same in principle ever since those days. The efforts which have been most successful in bringing men to repentance and salvation have been, not those connected with the most powerful arguing, or the most distinguished eloquence, or the most adroit manœuvres; but those which have originated in, and been sustained by, the warmest and most devoted piety. Thus many of the most successful sermons have had little literary merit. It was the warm and unaffected spirit of the preacher, which awakened, by sympathy, the moral susceptibilities of the hearer. Many a mother, in despair of doing any thing herself for her child but to pray for him, has supplied by the warmth and heartfelt interest of the prayers which she has uttered in his presence, the very means of his conversion, —so far as human means can go. The holy and heavenly spirit which has glowed in her heart, the love of the Savior, the hatred of sin, the desire for spiritual union with God, have been made the means, by divine grace, of awakening the moral susceptibilities in the heart of her child. Conscience has been aroused, and the lost child saved;— while the sons and daughters of many a profound theo-

logian, of far more extensive religious knowledge, but of a more lukewarm heart, have gone down, notwithstanding all parental efforts, to the grave, in sin. And so it has often happened, that some obscure and solitary Christian, living in want, and seeing all the world above him, has spent year after year, thinking that he does no good, and can do none, and wondering why God should spare a useless tree so long. And yet, though he knew it not, the light and the influence of his christian example have been seen and felt all around him. The spirit which has reigned within his bosom, has spread, by sympathy, to many others; and it has often aroused conscience, and held back a soul from many of its sins, where it could not win it completely to holiness; and thus God keeps this his humble follower on the stage of action, as one of the most efficient laborers in his vineyard, while he himself knows not why he is spared. Yes, holiness itself, is the great instrument by which holiness is to be spread. It will work most powerfully itself, by its mere existence and manifestation; and it must give to every other means, almost their whole efficiency, in acting upon the human soul. Thus the extension of Christianity in the world, is not to be the triumph of argument, nor the success of manœuvres,—but the *spread of feeling* from heart to heart, by a moral sympathy, which God by his grace will make effectual to moral renewal.

If then, my reader, you wish to devote your life to the work of doing good in the most effectual manner, or rather, in the only effectual manner, the main work before you, is the work of saving souls, by cherishing yourself, and extending from yourself to others, the spirit of holy obedience to God, and love to men. This general principle being, I trust, established, it remains only to give some plain and practical directions for carrying it into effect

I. THE PREPARATION.

1. Be sure that you are sincere and honest. We very often detect ourselves in assuming involuntarily, and almost insensibly, an air and tone of deep feeling in our prayers and in our conversation, which we do not really possess. We know that unless we are ourselves interested in religious duty, it is in vain to attempt to interest others in it, and we mistake appearing interested, for actually being so. How often do we observe the affected seriousness of countenance and solemnity of tone. How often do we detect ourselves in assuming it. Hypocrisy is one of the forms of sin into which the human heart, prone to iniquity, most easily and continually slides. It is one which the most sincere and devoted Christian finds continually taking possession of his heart, under a thousand shapes and disguises. But our hypocrisy seldom deceives any body but ourselves. The world are quick to detect the difference between what is natural and what is affected and assumed. It is real interest in religion,—real, heart-felt attachment to God, and honest, friendly interest in man, which the Spirit of God makes use of as a means to touch the feelings of others, and to arouse conscience, and awaken a sense of obligation to God; while the affectation of what is not possessed, is a slim disguise, which the instinct of mankind detects at once, and repels. Be honest, then. Be natural. If you really feel any warm-hearted interest in those around you, let your words and actions freely show it; but if you do not, guard most carefully against the attempt to feign any. I do not mean, guard against a deliberate and understood intention to impose upon men; for those only, who are utterly destitute of piety will be guilty of this; but watch your heart, lest, adroit as it is in eluding your vigilance, and running away into sin, it should escape you here. If you are aware that the real, unfeigned interest which you feel in the progress

of God's kingdom and the salvation of sinners, is not enough to enable you to go forward with much success, you must not attempt to remedy the difficulty by exhibiting more of the appearance, but by securing more of the reality. This brings us to the second of the directions we proposed to give.

2. Cultivate a genuine interest in the salvation of men, by appropriate meditation and prayer. It should be a part of our daily duty, in our hours of retirement and devotion, to bring the spiritual condition and prospects of our neighbors and friends distinctly before our minds. We have in the ordinary walks of life, so many mere business dealings with those around us, that we soon come to consider them in the light of mere business or social connections. The merchant or mechanic, whom we meet with every day, we soon come to consider as *merely* a merchant or mechanic, —we think of him as a workman,—we look at his character in a business point of view, and after a short time, we cease to regard him as an immortal being, going to the judgment, and destined to an eternity of holy happiness, or of wretchedness and sin. We forget that he has a soul to be saved, and that the responsibility of doing something to promote its salvation, devolves upon us. Now, this disposition to overlook the spiritual condition and prospects of our fellow men, is one which we can avoid only by continued meditation and prayer. We must have time, when, in the privacy of the closet, we may regard our fellow men as they are,—and see their true spiritual condition; when we may look at our neighbors and friends with a view to their prospects as immortal beings.

And we must not only think of the character and condition of our companions and friends, in respect to their prospects for eternity, but a part of our daily duty must be, honest, heartfelt prayer for them. I do not mean that we must utter a cold form of petition, asking, in general terms, for the conversion of sinners, and for the extension of God's

kingdom. We all do this as a matter of course. The language forms a part of every prayer, and it is uttered by thousands every morning, who feel none of the desires they seem to express. What I mean by really praying for sinners, is a very different thing.

Sincere prayer for the conversion of souls must spring from a distinct view of their spiritual danger, and an honest desire that they may be rescued from sin and its consequences. We must think of our neighbors and friends, of a parent, a husband or a child, as an enemy of God, justly obnoxious to his anger, and actually condemned already With our hearts full of compassion for them, and sorrow for the awful fate which we see impending over them, we must go alone before God, and pour out our whole souls before him, in fervent supplications that he will have mercy upon them and save them. It is not the cold repetition of a form of words, to which we have become so habituated that we cannot well construct a prayer without it, that will prevail with God. No, it is the warm, deep fervency of the heart, that *feels* for the sorrows and sufferings which it wishes to relieve.

There is one test of genuine prayer for sinners which is so simple and so easily applied, that I cannot forbear mentioning it here. It is the freedom with which particular cases are brought before God.

When our devotions are cold and formal, we content ourselves with generalities; but when prayer comes from the heart, it is dictated by feelings of strong compassion, and this compassion is awaked by considering the spiritual wants, and the gloomy spiritual prospects, of *individuals*. We shall bring these individual cases before God. We shall come with our neighbors, our acquaintances,—the one who walks with us to church, or who sits in the same seat; or our friend, or our parent, or our child. We shall bring the individual case to God, with strong crying and tears, that God would save them,—*those particular individ-*

Religious emotion.	Nature and province of it.	Illustration.

uals, from the woes and sufferings we see hanging over their heads.

3. Do not, however, lay too much stress upon religious emotion. One of the most common religious errors of the present day, is, the habit of confounding religious interest with religious emotion. Interest in religion is our constant duty. Emotion, is one of the forms which this interest occasionally assumes. Now many persons confound the two, and think that they are in a cold, stupid state, unless their hearts are full of a deep, overwhelming emotion. They struggle continually to awaken and to sustain this emotion, and are distressed and disappointed that they cannot succeed. They fail, for the obvious reason that the human heart is incapable of long continued emotion of any kind, when in a healthy state. Susceptibility of emotion is given by the Creator for wise and good purposes, but it is intended to be an occasional, not an habitual state of the mind; and, in general, our duty is to control, rather than to cherish it.

For example, a man loves his wife and his little children, and thinks that he may promote their permanent good in the world, by removing to a new home in the West, where he can make his labors far more effectual in laying a foundation for their wealth and prosperity, than he can in the home of his own childhood. He sets off, therefore, on the long and toilsome journey, to explore the ground and prepare the way for them to follow. As soon as he gets fairly upon the confines of the settled country, his mind is daily engrossed by his labors and cares. Now, he is toiling over the rough and miry road,—now hesitating upon the bank of a rapid stream,—now making his slow and tedious way through the unbroken forest, his mind intent in studying the marks of the trees, or the faint traces of the Indian's path. During all this time, he feels no *emotion* of love for his wife and children, but his mind is under the continued influence of the strongest possible *interest* in them. It is

The traveller at the West.	His letter.	Emotion.

love for them which carries him on, every step of the way. It is this that animates him, this that cheers and sustains; while he perhaps very seldom pauses in his labors and cares, in order to bring them distinctly to his mind, and fill his heart with the flowings of a sentimental affection.

At length, however, at some solitary post-office, in the cabin of a settler, he finds a letter from home, and he lays the reins upon his saddlebow, and reads the welcome pages, while his horse, willing to rest, walks slowly through the forest.

As he reads sentence after sentence of the message which has thus found its way to him from his distant home, his ardent affection for the loved ones there, which has, through the day, remained calm within, a quiet and steady principle of action, awakes and begins to agitate his bosom with more active emotions: and when, at the close of the letter, he comes upon a little postscript, rudely printed, asking "father to come home soon," it calls to his mind so forcibly that round and happy face which smiled upon him from the steps of the door when he came away, that his heart is full. He does not love these absent ones any more than he did before; but his love for them takes for the moment a different form. Nor is it that his affection is merely in a greater state of intensity than usual, at such a time. It is in a totally *different* state; different in its nature, and different, nay, the reverse in its tendency. For while love *as a principle of action*, would carry him forward to labor with cheerfulness and zeal for the future good of his family,—love, as *a mere emotion*, tends to destroy all his interest in going forward, and to lead him to turn round in his path, and to seek his shortest way back to his home. He readily perceives this, and though the indulgence of such feelings may be delightful, he struggles to put them down. He suppresses the tear which fills his eye,—folds up his letter,—spurs on his horse, and instead of considering the state of emotion, the one to be cultivated, as the

only genuine evidence of true love, he regards it rather as one to be controlled and suppressed, as interfering with the duties and objects of genuine affection.

Now the discrimination, which it is the design of the foregoing case to set in a strong light, is very often not made in religion. But it should be made. Piety, if it exists at all, must exist generally, as a calm and steady principle of action, changing its form, and manifesting itself as religious emotion, only occasionally. The frequency of these emotions, and the depth of the religious feeling which they will awaken, depend upon a thousand circumstances, entirely independent of the true spiritual condition of the soul. The physical influences by which we are surrounded,—the bodily temperament,—the state of the health,—the degree of pressure of active duty,—the social circumstances in which we are placed,—the season, the hour, the scenery,—a thousand things may, by the combined influence of some or of all of them, fill the heart with religious emotion,—provided that the principle of religion be already established there. But we must not suppose that religion is quiescent and inactive at other times. Religion is, to say the least, quite as active a principle, when it leads a man to his work in the cause of God, as when in his retirement, it swells his heart with spiritual joys. They are, in fact, two distinct forms, which the same principle assumes, and we cannot compare one with the other, so as to assign to either, the pre-eminence. Neither can exist in a genuine state, without some measure of the other. It is, however, undoubtedly the former, which is the great test of christian character. It is the former, which we are to strive to establish in our hearts, and in which we may depend upon making steady and certain progress just in proportion to the faithfulness of our vigilance, and the sincerity of our prayers.

But in point of fact, the attention of Christians in their efforts to make progress in piety, very often looks almost

exclusively to the latter. They think that continued religious emotion is the only right frame of mind, — while the human mind is so constituted, that continued emotion of any kind, is consistent only with insanity. They toil and struggle for emotion, — but they labor in vain, for emotion of any kind, is just the very last thing to come by being toiled and struggled for. The result is, therefore, either a feeling of dejection and confirmed despondency— or else the gradual cultivation of a morbid sentimentalism, which has nothing but the semblance of piety.

Our business then is, in our efforts to bring our hearts in a right state in respect to God's kingdom in this world, to cultivate a steady, healthy, active interest in it,—not to struggle in vain for continued religious emotion. If the one really reigns over us, it will lead us to exactly the right sort of effort in God's cause; and it will bring to our hearts many happy seasons of the other, in our hours of retirement, meditation and prayer.

4. It must be your habitual feeling, in all your plans for the salvation of souls, that you are and can be only the instrument,—that the only efficient means of success must be a divine influence exerted upon the soul. Consider often, how radical, how entire is the change which you wish to effect. If you only desired to alter a friend's course of conduct, by showing him another in which he might more safely and certainly gratify the reigning desires and affections of his heart, you might perhaps do it by the mere natural effect of the information you might give. But here, it is the very desires and affections of the heart themselves, which you wish to change. You are going to offer him the communion and friendship of God. It is just the very thing he would most dislike and avoid. He would rather have God away than near. You are going to offer him forgiveness of sin, through Jesus Christ, his Savior. Far from valuing the forgiveness of sin, which implies the abandonment of it, it is the continued commission of sin

which he most eagerly clings to. The terms of salvation, and the duties arising from them, are humbling: he is perhaps hesitating whether he can comply with terms so disagreeable. He is naturally proud. He can be pleased only with what is lofty. Now his heart must be changed, so that he shall *love* these very terms, and love them on the very account of their humiliating character. He never can be saved, until he so feels his sins, and the attitude in which he stands towards God, as to find the lowest place before the throne of God, the one to which he comes easily and with pleasure, and where he finds the greatest peace and happiness. You do not come, therefore, to show the soul a new way to get what it loves, but you come to lead it to love what it most dislikes and avoids. Humility, penitence, a lowly walk with God, the ceaseless presence and restraints of divine communion, escape from sin and every sinful pleasure, and the absorbing of the soul in holy spiritual joys;—these favors, invaluable as they really are, are not such as we can expect mankind to welcome, if left to themselves. In some cases, that is, when you act in coincidence with the desires and affections of the heart, the more clearly and distinctly you present reasonable claims, the more certain it is, that they will be adopted. But the more clearly and distinctly you offer these spiritual blessings to the world, the more open and unequivocal will be the decision with which they reject them. For in their very nature, they run exactly counter to, and across all their natural feelings, and wishes, and desires. God must work in them, to will and to do. While you kindly invite, he must move their hearts to love the boon you offer, and to accept the invitation. You must always feel this. It will make you quiet, lowly, submissive. You will walk humbly and softly before God in your labors to promote his cause, and it will be safe for him to give you success.

"Walk humbly and softly before God:" there is a great meaning in these words. Like children, who go out with

their father to a work of difficulty or danger, too much for their feeble powers. They walk quietly by his side. They speak to him with subdued voices, and walk with cautious steps, looking up to him for direction, and trusting to his strength for success. Just so the Christian should walk, in his path of active duty in this world,—humbly and softly by the side of his Father.

These suggestions we have offered in respect to the preparation,—the state of heart appropriate to the work of saving souls. We now come to consider the measures necessary in the work itself.

THE MEASURES.

1. Explore fully, the spiritual field around you. Not a little of good fails of being accomplished in this world, on account of its not being known how easily it might be done. Now every Christian, in his daily routine of business and of intercourse with society, finds himself placed in a little sphere of duty, which he ought to consider as assigned especially to him. The portion of the vineyard by which he is immediately surrounded, is the one which it is his peculiar province to till. And he ought, first of all, to make himself carefully acquainted with its conditions. We ought to make it our business to learn, by delicate, and gentle, and proper methods,—the actual spiritual condition of our acquaintances and friends, so as to be ready to act when there is opportunity for action. Hollow hearted and hypocritical zeal, in attempting to do this, will run itself into continual difficulties; and by its coarse, obtrusive, and censorious spirit, close up against itself, every avenue to the heart. But humble, unassuming, and heartfelt piety, warm with sincere attachment to the Savior, and honest benevolence towards men, will instinctively do this work without friction or noise.

The truth is, that there exists to a far greater extent

than is generally supposed, among impenitent persons in every christian land, a disposition to listen, at least, to the claims of religion, and to appreciate efforts for their salvation, made in honest good will. While the heart rises against holiness, union with God, and other spiritual blessings, it still shrinks from the prospect of perpetual and ceaseless sin; and he who tries to save his neighbors and friends from this ruin, will generally find, that though they may reject the salvation offered, and still cling to sin, they will generally feel a sentiment of kindness only, towards him who faithfully offered it. It was so with our Savior's preaching, the common impression to the contrary, notwithstanding. The ecclesiastical influence of his day, armed itself against him, but the populace every where thronged him. The common people heard him gladly. They welcomed him when he came in peace, with hosannas and branches of the palm tree; and when his enemies contrived to enlist the Roman military power on their side, so as to lead him out to Calvary,—the vast crowds from Jerusalem, followed lamenting and bewailing him. In those throngs, there might have been few who were his sincere disciples, but though they would not yield to the inflexible demands of the doctrine,—they could not but be touched by the unaffected and unceasing benevolence of the man. Now it always has been so, and it always must be so with proper efforts to save men's souls. Faithful attachment to the cause of God, will bring upon those who exhibit it, persecution, it is true,—but it is the persecution of the few, not of the many. That is the true distinction The Christian must expect, if he is faithful, to be buffeted, and opposed, and hated,—but it will only be by a few, whose peculiar circumstances, or whose extreme depravity, separates them from mankind at large. He must expect that the mass of those whom he endeavors to save, will appreciate his honest kindness, and feel something like respect and gratitude towards him.

These remarks, however, we wish the reader especially to observe, are intended to apply almost exclusively to private intercourse with neighbors and friends, in a quiet Christian community, where the principles and duties of Christianity are in theory admitted. When christian principle comes to array itself in opposition to powerful interests, or to the prevailing habits or pursuits of the community, it often awakens universal and most bitter hostility. Such emergencies have often occurred. The Savior foresaw one of them in the circumstances in which the apostles were to go forth, after his death, in a course whose tendency would be to undermine and destroy great national systems of superstition. Hence he gave them the warning; the plain and solemn warning, which would have damped any courage but that which he himself directly sustained.*

In respect, however, to the ordinary personal intercourse of private Christians, with their impenitent neighbors and friends, in a land like ours, we at least ought not to anticipate hostility. Many circumstances in the past history of piety, show that men have often been disposed to perceive its excellence in others, even when they would not yield to its influences themselves. Abraham was received with favor where he went. Joseph was generally respected and beloved. They were few who lowered him into the pit, and sold him into slavery. The character of Daniel commanded admiration, though there were malignant individuals who plotted against his life. John the Baptist was in no danger from the throngs around him, while defenceless, and in the solitary wilderness, he reproved them of sin. They loved to hear him. It was the hate of only *one* adulteress, and the cruelty of *one* tyrant, which cost him his life. So the general popularity of our Savior as a preacher, the crowds that every where thronged him, testify. His enemies were few, though they were powerful

* Matt. x: 16—33.

enough, with the help of Roman spears, to lead him to the cross. And lastly, Paul found a welcome, and listening hearers wherever he went. His dangers and difficulties were the work of a small number of designing men, and the populace moved against him only when these few, by falsehood and misrepresentation, urged them on.

Now we are slow to make the distinction pointed out above. We are apt to imagine that inasmuch as faithful, christian effort, must expect opposition in every age, it must expect it from every person; and we sometimes go about our work, expecting to be met every where with the look of hostility and defiance. And going with the expectation of finding this feeling, we insensibly speak and act in such a manner as to awaken it. The reader may have been accustomed to take a different view of the feelings with which the mass of mankind are prepared to receive honest efforts for their spiritual good, yet the more he reflects upon it, the more he looks at the testimony of scripture, and the history of the church, the more he will be satisfied that the view above presented, is true. If it is true, it is plain that we must go about the work of seeking and saving men, with the feeling, that our efforts, if properly and kindly made, will not be angrily received. That hostility and hatred are to be expected only from a few, but that the great majority, while they will still perhaps love and cling to their sins, will appreciate and feel the kindness which attempts to save them from future misery.

It is very probable, now, that some reader who may have perused these last paragraphs, without very discriminating attention, may understand me to say that the natural heart has no feeling of hostility to the claims of God's law. Whereas, a little attention will observe that I say no such thing. On the other hand, I have repeatedly asserted exactly the contrary. There is hostility to the claims of God's law, but not always hostility to the messenger who kindly presents those claims. It may seem strange, per-

haps, that a man should feel gratitude and attachment to the friend who endeavors to save him from the sin, while he yet loves the sin, and clings to it, and is determined not to let it go. But such is human nature, and the experience of every Christian who has been faithful in his Master's work, will readily call to mind many cases in illustration of it.

We are to make it our business then, to look around over the field to which God has assigned us, with the expectation of finding, in ordinary cases, a welcome, not a repulse, in our efforts to save the soul. This expectation should lead us to go forward boldly, but at the same time, delicately and kindly. We must be active, and faithful, and frank, and courageous, while at the same time we are mild and unassuming. If our hearts are really in it, it will be easy and pleasant work, and we shall have far more numerous opportunities for doing something for the cause of God, than we have supposed.

Almost every Christian would find within his family, or within the circle of his acquaintance, several persons who are constantly expecting,—even desiring that he will introduce religious conversation with them. Gently pressed, from time to time, for many years, perhaps, with feeble convictions of sin, they are continually hoping that some faithful, christian friend will address them. Though they dislike the service of God, and continue accordingly to live in sin, conscience is not quiet, and the future is darkened by their foreboding fears. They are inexcusable for continuing thus in sin, waiting for an influence from another,—but yet this influence, if exerted, might, very probably, be the effectual instrument in leading them to repentance. Now see to it, my reader, that no such cases exist near to you. Perhaps there are some. Explore the ground and see. It may be your most intimate and familiar companion, whom you have seen every day for years, and conversed with on every subject of interest to you both,

except the salvation of your souls; it is strange, but it is very often the case, that the Christian and the sinner who are most closely associated in the family, or in the business or social relations of life, are those between whom the subject of salvation is most shunned.

2. These views of the condition and of the feelings of mankind in respect to the efforts made for their salvation, should lead you to be frank, and open, and candid, in all that you do and say. Expect to be met with a friendly spirit; and act accordingly, with frankness, openness, and honesty. Resort to no artifices, no contrivances, no management. An anonymous letter, a concealed tract, a covertly insinuated reproof, will awaken nothing but displeasure, where an honest, direct and friendly communication would be received in the spirit with which it was given. In being open, however, be careful not to be ostentatious, and never let frankness degenerate into disrespectful familiarity, nor honesty become bluntness, nor plain dealing, coarse obtrusion. In all your religious intercourse also with others, be governed entirely by those rules of delicacy and propriety which constitute the cement and the charm of social life. Perhaps no error is more common, than for a professing Christian, forward and zealous in his Master's cause, to consider himself absolved from all obligations like these. The lofty nature of the work he has to do, rises so high, he imagines, as to lift him above all the restraints of these principles of action by which human conduct is ordinarily controlled. Sad mistake! It is not, however, that the work of saving souls ought to be sacrificed to the principles of human courtesy, but that it cannot go on in defiance of them. The paths in which we have to labor, in promoting the salvation of men, are the avenues to the human heart, and we cannot succeed, if we resort to measures by which every such avenue is barred up and defended.

I ought, however, here, and repeatedly in the course of

these remarks, to remind my readers that these directions are intended mainly for common Christians in the walks of private life. Cases do doubtless often occur, in which persons holding important stations in the church, and even private Christians, are bound to rebuke sin and sinners in the most decided manner. Nay, prevailing sins in a community, may sometimes call for an array of the followers of Jesus Christ, in an attitude of open and positive hostility. These cases we do not here include We refer only to the private efforts of individual Christians, in the common walks of life, to spread their Master's spirit from soul to soul.

3. Generally avoid discussion of doctrine with religious inquirers. There is a double reason for this. In the first place, you cannot remove the theoretical difficulties which cluster about the subject of religion, while the heart of the inquirer remains unchanged; and then in the second place, if you could do it by great effort, this labor may as well be spared,—for if the change in the heart is once effected, these difficulties will melt away of themselves, and all your labor of endless debate will be saved. The need of a Savior, for instance, you cannot establish by argument, to the satisfaction of a mind insensible of guilt. But let the moral sensibilities be once awakened,—bring conviction of sin, and the soul will hunger and thirst for a Savior, with an ardor of desire which nothing but an atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, will effectually relieve and satisfy. So in regard to the agency and the influence of the Holy Spirit;—there are a thousand questions connected with that subject, which cannot be understood by any mind in which those influences have not been felt. But where they have been felt, although the subject, even then, may not be theoretically understood, all the practical difficulties at once disappear. So with the desert of sin,—and the just weight and duration of future punishment; they cannot be seen by a mind that is impenitent and worldly. Many such

minds may, indeed, from the influence of early education, receive unquestioned, the scripture statements on all these subjects; but if they do not receive them,—if they have begun to entertain doubts, or to feel difficulties, you cannot easily solve or remove them by theological discussion, while the subject of them remains in his sins. A discussion, though begun on his part with an honest desire to have his difficulties removed, will soon become a contest for victory; and far from solving his doubts, it will be quite as likely that he will defeat you, as that you will satisfy him. The reason is, that the truths, or rather the elements to which the truths relate, which you wish to make plain to him, are spiritually discerned, and he in his present state, cannot know them. He may take them upon trust from others; but he cannot see them with his own eyes, or believe them with his own faith, till his eyes have been opened by influences very different from those of theological discussion.

There prevails among irreligious men, I mean, those who feel any interest at all in the subject of salvation, an impression that they must have clear ideas of *truth*, before they are under any obligation to do *duty*. They talk of looking into the subject of religion, of inquiring into the tenets of different persuasions, as *preliminary* altogether to personal piety. They seem to imagine that so long as peculiar circumstances,—such as the pressure of business, or the apparent balance of the argument,—keep them from coming to a decision about the theory, they are under no practical obligations whatever. The latter may, they think, properly remain in suspense, until the former are all settled; and the more argument and debate you hold with them, the more permanent is this impression. But the truth is, there is very little theoretical truth whose possession is necessary to bring upon a man the whole force of imperious obligation to repent of his sins. There is one question, it is true, which a man must have know-

Degree of knowledge necessary to salvation.

ledge enough to answer. "Have I ever done wrong?" If the powers of his feeble intellect grope in darkness, in respect to this question, his Maker will doubtless hold him exempt from moral obligation, through the imperfection of his faculties. But if, on the other hand, he has light enough for this, he need not *wait*, certainly, for more. The duty of repentance presses upon him with the whole weight of her claims. Until these claims are admitted, he ought not to expect to make successful progress in understanding the nature of God's government, or his relations to men. How can he expect it, while he shows himself God's enemy, by clinging to acknowledged sin.

Our first great duty, then, with religious inquirers, is to bring them, not to correctness of theological sentiment,—but to heartfelt conviction of sin: and this, not because correctness of religious sentiment is not immensely important, but because it is impossible to force it upon an impenitent heart by the mere power of reasoning. Error comes through the corruption of the heart; and the full establishment of the truth must be expected from its purification. The Spirit does indeed make the truth the instrument of conviction and conversion; nay more, the truth is the only instrument;—but the important point to be noticed is, that there is truth enough, which blazes before the mind and conscience of every man, to bring upon him the full force of moral obligation, though there may be many things connected with revealed religion, which, through the insensibility of a hardened heart, or the feebleness and imperfection of human powers, are involved in obscurity. Press, therefore, the obligations arising out of truths which cannot be denied, and by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, you may hope to awaken spiritual sensibility, by means of which the soul which you are attempting to save, shall hunger and thirst after more.

For example, we will suppose that an impenitent man in conversing with a religious friend, under some circum-

stances which have awakened temporary seriousness, expresses his state of mind as follows. The replies and remarks of the Christian, illustrate the course indicated by these principles.

Sinner. This subject has lately been a good deal upon my mind. I have, however, some difficulties. I have been inclined to disbelieve the doctrine of future punishment,—but some things lately, have led me to fear that I may have been mistaken, and I intend to take hold of the subject, and examine it fairly and thoroughly. Can you recommend to me any books?

He says this with an air of satisfaction, as if his christian friend would receive the intimation with joy and pleasure, and regard his determination to give both sides a fair hearing, as a very meritorious act.

His friend replies,

"I could name to you some books, but I should hardly advise you to attempt such an investigation."

"Should *not* advise me to!" exclaims the inquirer, "why not?"

"No, sir, I should not think that your first step would be to examine that subject."

"Why not?"

"Will you allow me to ask you a question? Perhaps I ought not to ask it; but since you request my advice in respect to your religious course, and as I cannot give it without distinctly understanding the facts, I know you will excuse it. Are you in the daily habit of secret prayer?"

"Why,—no sir,—I cannot say that I am."

"You believe there is a God?"

"Certainly, I do."

"And that he exerts a constant oversight and care of all his creatures?"

'Yes, sir."

"Do you think it right, or wrong then, for us to live in the neglect of all communication and intercourse with him?"

"It is wrong,—I must admit."

"I must ask one more question about it. When you consider the whole case, our connection with God and his commands,—do you think it *very* wrong, or only moderately wrong, to live many years, as you have, without any intercourse with him."

The man is silent. Utter speechlessness is the proper answer to such a question.

"Now, sir, I think there is a far more important, and more profitable question for you to examine, than the question of future punishment. It is this. Why is it that you are doing now, and have been doing, year after year, for a very long time, what you must see is the height of ingratitude and sin?"

"Why, sir, the truth is, I have not thought much about it."

"True: but that only brings up the question in a little different form. How could you have lived so long, with so many memorials of God all about you, and so many calls to love and serve him, and yet not think much about it? If you go to examining the subject of future punishment, you may, perhaps, get engaged in the discussion, so that your reasoning powers will be interested; but while your heart remains in its present state, you will end as you began,—your reason perplexed by the opposing arguments, and your conscience asleep, as it has been, in sin. But if you look into your heart, in view of your life of ungodliness and sin, with humble prayer that God will help you understand it, and that by his grace he will renew it, you may hope to be saved."

Or perhaps the inquirer comes with the same difficulty, but in a little different spirit. He wants to argue the case directly with *you*. He knows that you believe in the eternal suffering of the wicked, and comes with a store of objections and arguments, to refute the opinion. Now,

however strongly you may yourself believe, and however clear the arguments may stand in your own mind, and however easily you may be able to set aside every objection, you can make no progress in a debate with such a man. If he is a good disputant, he will know how to embarrass and perplex you, though he may have a bad cause. If he is a bad one, he will not understand your arguments, or appreciate the force and bearing of what you say; but he will be slipping off, and flying away in every direction, —and after an hour's debate, you will find that you have made no progress whatever.

You may say to him then,

"Suppose you should have such an argument, what would be the result? Suppose that you should convince me that there is no punishment for sin, in another world, what then?"

"Why then I should expect you would give it up, and not let us hear any more of it."

"And suppose I should gain the victory, and prove to your satisfaction, that there is a judgment to come, and that you will be called to account there for all your sins in this world?"

"Why—in that case,—I should admit it, if you convince me satisfactorily."

"And should you feel an obligation to attend to the subject of religion?"

"Yes, I should," he replies decidedly.—"If you will convince me that there is to be a judgment after death, I promise you, that I will immediately attend to the subject of religion."

"What do you mean by religion?"

"Why—we both understand what is meant by it.—I cannot undertake to define it."

"I understand by it, repenting of, and abandoning all sin, and beginning to love and serve God, in hope of forgiveness through Jesus Christ." "Very well."

"You admit this. Well, just see in what state of mind you are, when you come to have a discussion with me. You will not repent and abandon sin, or begin to love and serve God, because you think you are not to be called to account for it. If I can prove to you that there is a future world of eternal suffering, and that you must be ruined if you die as you are, then you will alter your course, and begin to love God; otherwise, you will not. Now I know that I never could convince you, while you are in this state of mind. It would do no good to try."

Your companion will find it difficult to reply to this, and you can easily lead him to see, that the facts in his case indicate a sad state of dislike to God and hostility to his reign; and that instead of disputing on the question whether he is to escape punishment for this or not, he ought to humble himself at once before God, and secure his forgiveness: for whether he is to be punished or not for it, it is, undoubtedly, a most heinous sin. So in all other cases. A man living in impenitence and sin, is not in a state of mind to be convinced of religious truth by disputation; and it is wiser and better that the attempt should not be made. This subject, however, will come before us again in another chapter.

4. Endeavor to lead the inquirer immediately to use the means of grace, honestly and faithfully. Let him begin to read the bible every day, and to pray to God in secret, and in his family, if he have one. Show to him that he ought at once and openly to abandon his sinful and worldly courses, and to devote a portion of his time to reading, meditation, religious conversation, and prayer. We sometimes shrink a little from giving these directions, lest they should turn off the attention from the duty of immediate repentance, and lead to a round of mere external duties, instead of forming that vital union with the Savior, by penitence and faith, which can alone save the soul. And there is, in fact, some danger here, but this should not

Common impression;—groundless. Immediate action.

prevent our pressing upon the impenitent sinner, his whole duty, as claiming at once his immediate attention; and these things are unquestionably a part of it. It is his undoubted duty to commence immediately the study of the bible, and secret prayer;—not hypocritically, or from mere selfish fear of future punishment,—but with honest sincerity, and from a heartfelt and holy desire to know and do the will of God. "But," say you, "he has not such holy desires,—his mind is only under the influence of selfish fear, and if he performs these external duties at all, it will be such in a manner as will only increase his guilt."

True, I reply, I will allow it. I will allow that at the moment of your giving the advice, the heart of the sinner is unchanged, and that without thorough moral renewal, all his external duties, will be merely superficial and hollow, —an abomination in the sight of God;—though whether they would be a greater abomination than utterly neglecting them, may not be certain. Still, how and when are we to expect such a moral renewal as is necessary, to take place? How and when are we to expect new and holy desires to spring up in the darkened and obdurate heart? What occasions are we to hope that the Spirit will make use of, to renew the soul, and awaken spiritual life there? There can be but one answer. The right feeling is most reasonably to be expected to arise, in conjunction with an effort to perform the right act. If a hundred religious inquirers were to be told simply, that it would be useless for them to attempt to do their duty, until their hearts are changed, they would imagine that they had nothing to do, but to wait for this change, and the result would be, returning indifference and stupidity, or else a gloomy and settled discouragement, or despair. On the other hand, if the religious teacher should urge immediate action, pressing, at the same time, the indispensable necessity of holy motive, the very change desired, would be most likely to take place simultaneously with the attempt to comply. We

say to an impenitent sinner, "Go to your closet, and there spread out your sins before God, confessing and giving up every one, but be sure that you do it honestly. Hate and loathe them, while in the act of thus confessing them. Be sure to be honest with God." We say this, not with the idea that it is possible for a sinner, *remaining impenitent in heart*, to make an acceptable confession,—but because we hope that the moment of falling upon his knees in solitude, or the moment of determining to do so, or some other moment during the season of confession, may be the one chosen by the Holy Spirit, to renew and sanctify the darkened and sinful soul. So we should say, "You ought to set apart a time every day for reading the bible, attentively studying it, and praying at the same time for God's guidance and blessing in enabling you to understand and do his will." And this, not that we imagine that the reading of the Scriptures, while the heart remains hostile to God, can be a service at all acceptable to him,—but because we hope that the first sincere and honest desire to *do* God's will, may be awakened by the renewing influences of the Spirit, while the sinner is in the attitude of studying to *know* it. So with all the other means of grace, and external, religious duties. The turning of the soul towards them are, and always have been, *the occasions* which God has most frequently seized upon, to renew and sanctify the soul. Inquire of your religious acquaintances and friends, and they will almost with one voice, tell you so. One felt the first emotions of penitence arising in his heart, while he was uttering the language of penitence. Another first turned his soul to God, while reading of his holiness, his majesty, his glory, in his Word. A third submitted, while on his knees in prayer. It is not indeed *always* so. We can assign no limits, nor prescribe any universal rule to the operation of the Spirit upon the heart; but it is perfectly safe to say that it is *generally* so. An immensely large proportion of the conversions which take place, take place

while the soul is in such an attitude as I have described. Our duty is, therefore, towards our impenitent friends, to endeavor to bring them into this attitude. We must lead them to commence immediately the performance of every known duty,—charging them, however, to be sure that they do it with right feelings of heart. We cannot be too careful in leading them to see, that if they should do these things with hearts still remaining hostile to God, instead of doing any thing to merit his favor, they only provoke his displeasure more and more.

We shall find, on examination, that the instructions given in the bible, correspond with these views. The direction given to religious inquirers, is, in a vast number of instances there, not the naked and simple direction to begin to *feel* right, but to begin to *do* right, in the exercise of right feelings. See, for example, John's preaching, our Savior's calls to his apostles,—the whole tenor of the Sermon on the Mount, and, as a case peculiarly in point, the directions given by our Savior to Saul.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

"Arise," is the answer, "and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do." Here is a simple act to be performed. Not, in itself, at all of a religious nature; but it was to be performed on a principle of obedience and faith. Paul obeyed; and his rising to go into the city, in obedience to his Savior's commands, was perhaps the commencement of his submission and his love, and of that long continued and most devoted attachment, which waters could not quench, nor floods drown.

In many other instances, however, in the New Testament, the direction is more general. Repentance, as a feeling of the heart, is directly enjoined, and we ought always to enjoin it, so that the inquirer may never, for a moment, imagine that any thing but a radical, moral renewal, can ever make him a child of God, or a fit inheritor of heaven.

Philosophy of human nature. Immediate duty.

It is interesting to observe how the operations of the Holy Spirit, in renewing the human heart, correspond with the philosophy of human nature, in respect to all other moral action; for we can in all other cases, best secure right feeling, by enjoining a corresponding right act. If the Samaritan had called back the Levite to the wounded traveller, and remonstrated with him on his unfeeling heart, and urged him to *feel* more kindly, and then to come and help him relieve the sufferer, he would probably have remonstrated and urged in vain. And yet, if he had said, "Come help me raise this poor sufferer and carry him to the inn, he will die if we leave him here,"—the Levite might perhaps have responded to the appeal, and kind feeling might have been awakened in his heart, by the very performance of a kind action. So when Nehemiah said to his brethren, "Come, let us build again the wall of Jerusalem," he awoke more effectually, the spirit of patriotism, among his countrymen, by thus calling upon them to act, than he could have done by the most powerful appeal to the feelings alone. Such is human nature. Right sentiments, and right emotions, come most readily in conjunction with right action, and God, in the operations of his Spirit, conforms to those laws of the human heart which he has himself ordained.

We never need fear, therefore, pressing upon sinners, the claims of immediate duty, in action, if we at the same time, press the indispensable necessity that such duty should be performed under the impulse of renewed affections. Lead them to seek salvation diligently, in the use of the means which God has appointed. There can be no reasonable ground of hope for those who neglect them.

5. In all conversation with religious inquirers, we ought to feel ourselves, and lead them to feel, that entering the service of God, is a very great step, which changes the whole plan and object, and alters all the enjoyments and sufferings of life. The Christian who begins his new life

Promote a very thorough change. Approximation desirable.

with an idea that it is a slight thing, will never make a very efficient Christian. If we take any proper views of it, it is a very great thing, and we ought to take special care that all our influence over those who are seeking salvation, should be such as to lead them to a very thorough change. We must not heal the hurt of sin slightly, and thus make superficial, heartless and worldly Christians,—to do nothing while they live, but hover about the line between the friends and the enemies of God, and thus obliterate the distinction which God intended to have as strongly marked as possible. Let it be a pure, a devoted, a thoroughgoing piety, which our efforts may help to spread.

6. At the same time, we should be pleased with every approximation to what is right. If men will not actually do their duty, the nearer they come to doing it, the better. And yet there is a very common impression that it is not so. It is very often said, for example, that there is more hope of an open enemy of religion, than of one who is upright, and moral, and regular in outward observances. But it is the love of paradox which gives such a sentiment currency among mankind. Let any one look at the history of any church, with which he has been connected, and inquire from what classes of the community, the greatest number of additions to it, have been made. It will be found, almost universally, that though there may be many detached instances of the conversion of the infidel or the reviler, the profligate, the bold and open enemy of God,—yet that these cases are comparatively few. The great majority of admissions to the christian church, are from the class of the moral, the thoughtful, the regular attendants upon christian worship, and the readers of his Word. When religion is revived, numbers from this class arise, give up their sins, and enter the service of God; and others are brought into their places, to become themselves the subjects of renewing grace at a future time. Let no one infer from this, that a man is any the less guilty of

neglecting and disobeying God, because he is regular and upright in the performance of his outward duties. I have not said that he is the less *guilty*, but only that he is in less danger. His danger is indeed appalling,—if he could but see it,—appalling in living even for a day in sin, when he is every moment liable to be called into eternity. Still it is less than if he were the open and avowed enemy of religion. So that if we really wish to save men, we shall desire to bring them as near as we can to salvation. Induce as many as possible to enter the narrow way, and then bring as many more as possible up near to the gate; and those which are more remote, and will not come near to it, perhaps may be induced to approach a little. All approximation, while it does not diminish their sin, may diminish their danger.

If, for instance, you have a neighbor who hates religion and its friends, and has walled himself in, so that you can gain no access to him with religious truth, you can do him a kindness, if opportunity offers, and thus connect in his mind one pleasant association with a religious man. It is one step. A small one, I grant; but its influence is, so far as it has any influence, to bring him a little more within the reach of a call which may ultimately awaken him. He remains quite as much the enemy of God, as before, —quite as hostile,—quite as inexcusable,—but his case is not quite so hopeless. In the same manner, if there is near you, a family living in heathen indifference and neglect of the ordinances of God, and you can bring them to his house, and aid them to find their regular seat there, and lend them suitable books, for the Sabbath, and introduce the children into the Sabbath school,—you will have made important progress, though perhaps every member of that family, may be as decidedly the enemy of God, as fully obnoxious to his displeasure afterwards, as before. You have made progress, for you have brought them fairly within that circle, over which the waters of salvation flow,

and in years to come, there will probably be found among the children and children's children of that family, many a christian household, and many a saved soul,—though your effort, in its immediate results, did not, in the least, diminish the moral distance, which separated the objects of it from God. And once more. If you have within the circle of your acquaintance, persons of upright and moral character, and you can induce them to read the Scriptures daily, and to establish family prayer, even if they continue unchanged, your labor is not lost. They are not indeed made half Christians. There is no such thing as a half Christian. They remain the enemies of God, while their hearts are alienated from him; the more clearly the light of the gospel shines around them, the more evident and striking will appear their guilt, when God calls them to account. Still, though there may be no *piety*, there is a slight increase of *hope*. You bring them habitually under the influence of the truth, and this is the only means by which they can be saved;—and every approach to what is right, quickens the moral sensibilities, and makes the next step easier.

In the same manner, approximation towards right opinions, is always desirable. It is better to be a Deist, than an Atheist, and a nominal Christian, however heartless, than either. It is better to receive the New Testament only as a revelation, than to reject both new and old. He who acknowledges God, but rejects a Savior, is not in a condition so desperate, as he who rejects both Maker and Savior too. Persons embracing a corrupted or defective form of Christianity, are more accessible, conscience is more easily awakened, conviction of sin and penitence are more readily felt, than under the deadening influence of paganism. Many of my readers may have been accustomed to think differently. The truth is, we have generally the most controversy with those who differ the least from us, and so we magnify and exaggerate the importance of the difference, and say in the ardor of our zeal, that our

immediate opponents are doing more injury than those who reject a great deal more. But if we look at facts, we shall find that it is not so. If we take any community, which is divided into various sects, holding every form and degree of error, from pure evangelical Christianity, down to open Atheism, we shall find that the spread of real piety among all these classes, will bear a pretty just proportion to the distance at which they respectively stand from the standard of scripture truth. Instead, therefore, of looking with a jealous and malignant eye, upon those who differ least from us, we should be glad to have them as near as they are; and while we do every thing in our power, to keep the standard of piety among the followers of Jesus Christ, elevated, and the standard of doctrine pure, we should rejoice at every approximation which we can effect, either towards the one or the other.

It would be wrong to bring this chapter to a close, without reminding the reader once more, in the most distinct and emphatic manner, that his only hope of success in his efforts to save his fellow men, is in divine influences exerted upon the heart, in connection with his endeavors. We have no new truths to present to the minds of men, and no new means to try. Our friends and neighbors who are living in sin, know all that we can tell them; and in repeating efforts which have been made before, in vain, our only hope must be, in the renewing agency of the Holy Spirit. Besides, if we were coming to our fellow men with the first tidings which ever reached them of God, and duty, and judgment to come, we could expect, if unaided, nothing but unqualified and universal rejection of the claims of religious duty. Persuasion, which is often powerful in altering human *conduct*, can never change the human *heart*. You may persuade a proud, ambitious man, to take this or that course to gain his objects, but you can never *persuade* him to be *humble*. Men generally dislike

and loathe the idea of having God present with them at all times, and you can never reason them into loving it. The experiment would be like that of the foolish nurse, who tries to make the shrinking child believe that the medicine she offers him, is pleasant to the taste. She argues, entreats, assures, but all in vain,—the palate, whose revolting tendencies lie beyond the reach of such means, still rebels. And so with the unrenewed soul of man: the difficulty with him is not ignorance, it is not darkness,—it is not mistake, but it is that spiritual pleasures,—growth in holiness, and the happiness of union with God, are exactly what he most dislikes, and most wishes to shun; and the more distinctly and clearly you present salvation to him,—for it is these things which salvation means,—the more distinctly he understands what it is, the more decidedly, if left to himself, will he reject it. It is, therefore, not enough to say that the work to be done in saving men from sin, is too great, in degree, for our powers, but it is removed, by its very nature, from the field in which we can exercise them; and if we rightly understand this, if we see the subject in the light in which both the bible, and a sound philosophy exhibit it, we shall work humbly while we work diligently; and when God gives success to our efforts, by the renewing agency of his Spirit, our hearts will glide spontaneously into the ascription, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto God be all the glory."

In a word,—our efforts to do good in this world, in order to be successful, must be grounded on the fact that it is a world lost in sin. It is strange that even philosophers, not to say professed Christians, could ever have doubted this. It would seem that every one, must be at once convinced of it, by contrasting the admirable success of all the other works of God, in answering their purposes, with the conspicuous and universal failure of man, as a moral being, to answer his. Let the eye rove over this visible creation,

and observe our fruitful fields, our splendid skies, our glorious sun. Watch the movements and the changes which the elements undergo, and see how admirably heat and cold,—vapor, hail and snow,—the rolling ocean, and the soaring cloud, do the bidding of God, and accomplish to perfection, their purposes. Whether you regard the grandeur of design, or the mightiness of execution, or the inconceivable perfection in the finish of details, all will impress you with an idea of the lofty standard which the Great Architect has aimed at, and reached, in all his works. You may go into the forest, and examine as minutely as you please, the most unknown and concealed wild flower which grows there. Look at its form, its colors,—the grace and beauty of its movements, as it waves in the wind, whose movements are adjusted to an exact equilibrium with the strength and pliancy of its stem Observe the mechanism by which the seed is produced, and the perfection of its structure when formed, and packed with a hundred others, as perfect as itself, in its little capsule. Or look at the little insect creeping upon its stalk, so minute, that you must magnify it a hundred times to distinguish the brilliancy of its coloring and the perfection of its members. Or if you wish to take a specimen on a larger scale, look into the heavens, and study the arrangements and the motions of the solar system; and look at the admirable success of these arrangements in producing here the change of day and night, summer and winter, and all the agreeable vicissitudes of the year. Study the movements of the great machine, and find if you can, the jar, or the friction, or the irregularity. It has been in ceaseless motion for forty centuries,—time, one would think, to test the mechanism.

But when you come to look at man, considered as a moral and social being, gathered into communities here, to accomplish those purposes of holiness and happiness which a benevolent Deity must have intended, in calling

moral and sentient beings into existence, you see a most conspicuous and terrible case of failure. The plans which God has formed for his social prosperity and happiness, are all deranged by his sins. The family, the home, the connection which binds parent to child, and child to parent, the social relations which link society together, all these intended fountains of happiness, are poisoned and spoiled by sin. Yes, all physical nature is great and glorious,—but man is degraded and in ruins. Every thing else, is right, but his heart is wrong. The object of his being, he does not accomplish; the happiness which is within his reach, and which he was made to enjoy, he does not gain; and he stands forth, in the view of all the intelligent creation, a mournful spectacle of ruin. It would seem that no man, who would candidly look at the facts, could ever for a moment imagine, that the world is at all in the moral and social condition, in which God intended it to be. No, it is a world in ruins,—"a moral wreck, and our business is, while we live here, to save as many from it, as we can."

CHAPTER VI.

PUBLIC MORALS.

"By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

CHRISTIANITY has not only the power to secure eternal life to those who personally yield to her claims,—she also exerts an immense influence in purifying and preserving the whole social community. She has, however, done less than christian writers have often claimed for her. She has not put a stop to war; she has not put a stop to slavery, or the slave trade; she has not infused moral principle into the mass of any extended populace, so as to prevent the

necessity of governing them by physical force; and it is actually difficult to ascertain, from the contradictory reports of intelligent travellers, whether life and property are safer, or the state of public morals less corrupt, in Paris or London, than they are at Constantinople, or on the banks of the Hoang-ho.

We say, it is *difficult* to ascertain,—the difference is so much less than it ought to be. The inquiry, fairly made, however, gives a result greatly in favor of Christendom. Life and property are safer, and public morals are far, very far less corrupted in English villages, among the hills and valleys of Scotland, in Germany, France, Italy, and New England,—than on the shores of the Caspian Sea, or on the plains of China, or in Syria or Java, or on the banks of the Niger and the Nile. And the difference is greater in reality, than in appearance, for we must consider, not only the actual state of public order which prevails, but the comparative degree of governmental pressure, which is found necessary in the respective countries, to secure it. The quiet and peace which reign in the interior of Christian countries, are maintained by a far lighter hand, than that which is necessary to control a community of Mohammedans or Pagans. A criminal in Boston has a remote and uncertain prospect of suffering before him, to deter him from crime. There is his hope of escaping detection,—for there is no argus-eyed police, or watchful spy, taking note of his movements. Then there are the forms through which he must pass, the extreme scrupulousness with which every evidence against him, not strictly legal, will be rejected; the ingenuity of his advocate; the feelings or the doubts of his jury; and, lastly, the calm impartiality of his judge, under the influence of no wish, but to make the punishment as light as justice will possibly allow. How different from the stern and unfeeling severity, with which the criminal of Constantinople is taken to the nearest officer of justice, who is, perhaps, responsible for the order

of his district, with his head, and there, without ceremony or delay, bastinadoed, hung, drowned, strangled, or impaled. Yes; to ascertain the power of Christianity upon the condition of the community, we must take into view, not only the degree of public order which christian and unchristian countries secure, but the comparative amount of despotic pressure and severity which they find necessary in order to secure it.

The truth is, that a certain degree of regard for life and property, and of public order, is necessary for the very existence of society; and governments insensibly assume the degree of power, be it more or less, which may be necessary to secure this. So that the influence of Christianity upon a nation, will show itself, at first, not so much in lessening the amount of vice and sin, as in diminishing the pressure necessary to keep it within bounds. It lightens the hand of government, and softens its asperities. For it is public opinion which supports even the strongest governments,—an opinion based on the necessity of suppressing disorder and crime. Christianity, by diminishing the tendency to disorder, compels government to lighten its hand. We see, therefore, in the comparative mildness and gentleness of christian governments, a tribute to the salutary influence of Christianity. But when we make the influence which she has exerted, as great as we can, by this and other considerations, how far is it below what it ought to have been. How sad is the moral and social condition of the most highly christianized country on the globe. How much is yet to be done in England and America, in removing abuses, arresting the progress of public vice, and in carrying the light, and the happy influence of the gospel into the great mass of society. How many wrongs are yet unredressed; how many vices yet unrestrained; how many unnecessary sorrows and sufferings reign every where, which Christianity, even in its indirect influence, might easily remove.

The Christian's appropriate work.

This chapter is to be devoted to a consideration of this subject;—the way by which Christianity is to produce its salutary effect upon the moral and social condition of the community. Of course, the reader will not expect a specific plan of operations, for the removal of particular evils. These will vary with the nature of the evil to be remedied, and the extent of the moral means which may be brought to bear upon it. Our design will therefore be, not to lay down plans of proceeding for particular cases, but to bring to view such general considerations, as ought to be kept in mind, and allowed to influence our measures, and regulate the feelings of heart with which we attempt to carry our measures into effect.

1. It is a very serious question, and one which the Christian community ought to consider well, how far we are to leave our appropriate work of directly building up the kingdom of Christ, for the purpose of going forth into the world, to correct evils and abuses which reign there. No one, who understands at all the nature of sin and its remedy, can doubt that our great work here, is to bring as many individual souls as possible to actual repentance, and to raise the standard of holiness among those thus changed, to the highest point. This is laboring directly, to promote the kingdom of Christ,—the extension of its walls, and the purification and spiritual prosperity of all within. This is the true way, by which the remedy for sin, is ultimately to reach the full extent of the disease. The plan of Jesus Christ for saving the world, is not mainly, that the indirect influence of Christianity upon the public conscience, shall gradually meliorate the moral condition of unsanctified men in a mass, but that these men shall, one by one, be brought to conviction and thorough repentance, and made in succession, his followers and friends; not restrained a little, *as a community*, from their worst vices, by the indirect influence of the gospel, but changed thoroughly, *as individuals*, into new creatures in him. It is, therefore, to

promote the spread of this individual, personal piety, that constitutes the great object at which we should aim. The other is secondary. It is occasional. Still, it has its claims. We are citizens of a community, as well as members of a church, and each relation gives rise to its appropriate duties. Cases often have occurred, in the history of Christendom, and are now continually occurring, in which religious men may go forth with advantage, into the great community, and accomplish vast good, by the power of a moral influence, more efficient in its appropriate sphere than legislative enactments, or military force. Generally, however, the province of Christian labor, lies in a different region; and the influence which piety is to exert upon the great unsanctified mass of mind which envelopes it, is indirect, spontaneous, collateral; an influence which follows of its own accord, while the Christian is intent upon his own proper work of extending pure and thorough personal piety.

2. When we go out to act thus upon society, we must remember that we act as members of a community which is under one common responsibility with us to God, and that those whom we are endeavoring to influence, are not responsible to us. The evils which we attempt to prevent or mitigate, are sins against God, and they who commit them, are accountable to him for their guilt,—not to their fellow men. This should influence the tone and spirit with which we should approach them. We are like children whose father is away, and if some do wrong, the others are not clothed with any authority to arrest or punish it. The only remedy, is the gentle moral influence, which one child may properly exert upon another.

A father sometimes, in such a case, returns, and finds an older child, dictating with earnest gesticulations and imperious tone, its duty to another. He stands before the little delinquent, putting down his foot with an air of authoritative command, and insisting upon some supposed

duty, with the language and tone and manner, which, perhaps, he has caught from some extreme exercise of authority, on the part of his father.

The parent, coming in suddenly in the midst of this scene, remonstrates. "Why," says the child, "I am only trying to make him do what you tell him. Is not that," describing what he was endeavoring to enforce, "what you tell him?"

"Yes," replies the parent, "that is what he ought to do, but you have no authority to *make* him do it. Your power over your little brother is persuasion,—not authority."

Now there are many such scenes as these, acted among older children, than those which play around the fireside. For human laws, restraining outward injury by man against man, there is, indeed, human authority. But for the divine law, as God is the sole avenger of it, so he alone may speak with the tone of authority and command. We are all, in respect to those moral duties and relations, which human laws do not cover, only children of one common Father, and the tone which we should assume towards our fellow men, is that tone of gentle, unassuming, though clear, and fearless, and decided moral influence which one child may properly assume towards another.

3. It follows as a necessary inference from the last head, or rather, as an expansion of it, that our work, when we attempt to act upon the community, is the work of persuasion. If we assume the air and tone of censorious authority, we fail entirely of our object, with those whom we endeavor to influence. Usurped authority always invites resistance. The little child will resist the unauthorized dominion of his older brother: and how seldom, in the history of nations, has an usurper maintained a permanent seat upon the throne. The dynasties of Cromwell and of Napoleon, expired with their founders, as the dynasties of usurpers almost always will. Even where men have no special objection to the thing which is to be done, they

will be led to resist it, even by the mere air and tone of compulsion, coming from a quarter, where they feel that there is no proper authority. Thus the human heart, may, in a thousand cases, be easily led, when it cannot be driven by those who have no right to drive. It results from that instinctive principle of human nature, which leads man to arouse himself to the resistance of all unauthorized power.

Now although good men seldom endeavor actually to force a moral reform upon the community, by physical compulsion, they do not unfrequently assume such a tone and air of authority, as produces, in a great degree, the same ill effects. We ought to guard against this; and we may easily guard against it, by taking a correct view of our place and province, as individual members of God's great family. We, as well as others, and others as well as we, are independently responsible for our moral conduct, to our common Father. So that moral suasion, and influences analogous to it, are our only sources of power.

4. We must remember that the true servants of God in this world, are in a very small minority, and consequently that they can do nothing by force. So that the view given under the last head, is not only correct in theory, but it is the only one which can be successful in practice. We are in a very small minority,—so that unless the case is a very extraordinary one indeed, giving us an immense aid from the power of the public conscience, we cannot conquer in open war. We cannot know the numerical ratio which the friends of God, in this world, bear to his enemies; but every one who has any proper idea of what a life of penitence and faith is,—a habitual preference of duties towards God, and the interests of eternity, over the pursuits and pleasures of time and sense,—will admit that this ratio is yet very small. We should have to make a very large deduction, from even the number of communicants in the churches, for hypocrites, and worldly minded Christians, who, in any open contest, will always throw their influence

with the world. Thus in the contest between right and wrong, as it is going on at the present time, even in the most favored nation in Christendom, the armies are very unequally matched in respect to numbers, and we therefore can expect little success in open war.

5. Our own internal divisions and jealousies make us weaker, than the mere inspection of our numbers would indicate. How often is it that one denomination, or one theological party, shows itself far more afraid of the progress of the opposing one, than of the progress of sin. Thus many a measure, originating in one quarter of the christian community, finds hostility, or a feeling of jealousy equally fatal, in another; and the Congregationalist joins with the Infidel to thwart Episcopal plans, or Baptist and Deist combine to prevent Congregational ascendency. It is not always so. There is often a praise-worthy cooperation; but while the different branches of the church, place as much stress as they do now, upon their distinctive forms of organization and discipline, questions of public morals will often become involved with questions of ecclesiastical strife. This danger we should consider. It certainly is a very important element to be taken into the account, in estimating the moral force which the Christian community can command in its contests with a wicked world, on questions of public morals.

5. It follows from the preceding considerations, that we ought to be cautious how we get the community divided into parties, the church and the world arrayed, one against another, in open war. We are not strong enough for such a contest, and if we were, victory would be hardly worth the gaining.

First, I say, we are not strong enough. This is evident from the preceding heads; and the moral history of all christian communities confirms it. Whenever, on any moral question, the lines have been drawn, and sides taken, and a contest commenced, the success has been almost

invariably on the wrong side. This has always been the case, whether the arena of the conflict has been in the competition of business, or in the enforcement of laws, unsupported by public opinion, or in balloting at the polls. The majority on the side of worldliness and sin, is altogether too great, yet, to be overcome in any such way. We can neither conquer the wicked in an open contest, or run them down in competition, or out vote them at elections, or outnumber them in mustering our followers, or baffle them in manœuvering. We may exert an immense influence over them and over the whole community, by the power of moral suasion, and by the gentle, unassuming influence of personal piety; but when it comes to drawing lines and forming parties in array, setting one side against the other, there is scarcely any question in public morals which can stand the struggle.

And yet we often take such a stand, and assume such a tone, that the mass of the community feel themselves challenged to a war. They begin to array themselves then against us. Watchwords and symbols are gradually adopted on both sides. On the one part, religious zeal, and on the other, enmity to God, is fanned and inflamed by mutual opposition. The lines of demarcation become continually more distinct, and defeat to the right, is the almost invariable result of the battle. There may be some few and rare exceptions, but while the minority on the side of duty is as small as it is now, and while that small minority is so divided and weakened by intestine dissensions, the exceptions must be exceedingly few and rare.

Then, again, the victory, if obtained, would be scarcely worth the gaining. To put down sin by superior force, is but putting a constraint upon human desires, whereas, the thing to be done, is to change the nature of those desires. We do not mean to say that the former is never desirable, but that it is only by the latter, that the real kingdom of Jesus Christ is to be extended in the world. What we

wish is, to bring men to abandon sin themselves, as individuals, on their own individual, personal, single, free will. And it is only so far as this is done, that any real progress is made, in bringing back this lost world to its Maker. Let us proceed, then, in all our efforts, with a proper understanding of the true nature of the work we have to do, and of the moral means we possess of effecting it; and avoid a course, when we can avoid it, which will awaken and concentrate hostility to our cause, and unite the enemies of piety and bring them to bay.

6. Our plans for promoting the moral improvement of the community, are often impeded by this cause, viz. that we gradually connect with our efforts, something wrong in the spirit which we exhibit, or in the measures we adopt, and the result is, that the attention of the community is turned away from the great moral evil itself, which we wish to correct, and fixed upon the comparatively little evils which creep into our mode of correcting it. Just as in an argument, if one overstates a fact a very little, or presses a point a very little farther than it will bear,—his antagonists will immediately seize upon that excess, and try to transfer the contest to that part of the field, where he has the advantage,—drawing it away from the general merits of the question, where perhaps his cause could not be sustained. So when we call the attention of the community to their sins, eager as they will be to escape the subject, they will scrutinize our conduct and measures, and transfer the contest, if any ingenuity can do it, to a dispute about something which we do that is indiscreet, or imprudent, or unguarded. Now a wise logician, in managing his argument, aware of the danger I have above described, will state his facts a little less strongly than he is prepared to prove them, and in pressing his points, will stop a little short of the line to which they might legitimately be carried, so as to have every thing completely protected and secure, and to expose no weak points to invite attack, and produce a

diversion. These tactics, so unquestionably sound in the intellectual conflict, are equally so in the moral one. We must consider beforehand what will be the charges probably made, and must guard especially against affording the least ground for making them.

7. We are often actuated by feelings so inconsistent with the principles of the gospel, in attempting to act upon the moral condition of the community, that we cannot hope for success. And yet these feelings, unhallowed as they are, conceal themselves from our view, or disguise themselves in the garb of holy emotions, and thus elude us. Perhaps those which most easily gain the ascendency in our hearts, when we think we are only honestly interested in the cause of God, are censoriousness, and party spirit. The one, the corruption and perversion of the proper feelings towards the sin which we oppose, and the other, a similar corruption and perversion of the proper feelings towards the kingdom of Christ, which we profess to promote. In other words, instead of a proper hostility to sin, which is always coupled with feelings of kindness and compassion towards sinners, our hearts become the prey of feelings of censoriousness towards the sins, and irritation against the sinners. And so, instead of that calm, quiet union of heart with all who love the Savior, and exemplify his principles, united with a simple, honest desire that these principles should spread, we insensibly yield ourselves to the dominion of party spirit. We wish that our *side* should conquer in the conflict; we enjoy the mortification of our enemies, when they receive a blow; we struggle for the pleasure of victory,—having so identified ourselves with our party, that we consider its victories as, in some sense, triumphs of our own.

Censoriousness and party spirit:—they are the bane and the destruction of the Christian cause. And yet *censoriousness* is not precisely the word to convey our meaning; for that usually imports the habit of *speaking* with unchari-

Anger and irritation. True sorrow for sin.

table severity, of the faults of others, whereas the sin which we wish to characterize, has its origin in the heart, and censoriousness is one of its fruits. It is the feeling with which the unrenewed heart of man regards those sins and failings of others, in which it fancies that it does not itself participate. It looks upon these faults and failings with a sort of malignant exultation, and upon the victim of them with a feeling of irritation or hostility; and when he suffers the bitter fruits of them, it enjoys a secret satisfaction which is of the nature of revenge. True piety, on the other hand, mourns over sin, and mourns equally, with the tenderest compassion, over the sad prospects of the sinner. Censoriousness, which is the outward expression of the one, loves to talk of the faults she condemns when the censured ones are away, and no end can be accomplished by it but the indulgence of her own malignant gratification. A bitter smile, or an affected look of concern is upon her countenance, and "I despise," or "I cannot bear," is the language with which she expresses the vexation and the impatience of her heart. But when she comes into the presence of the object of her displeasure, she is either all heartless smiles, or she assumes an air of dignified and cold reserve; the two most common robes of disguise,—oh, how frail and thin,—with which the hatred of the human heart is covered.

Piety, on the other hand, sorrows for sin;—she is not vexed and angry with it. She speaks of the guilt or the errors of the absent, very seldom,—and then with no irritation or secret satisfaction. And when she is in the presence of one whose sins or follies she mourns, the real spontaneous feelings of her heart give an expression of honest kindness and interest to her countenance, and a friendly tone to her voice. The sin which she laments, she does not look upon as an offence against her, that arouses hostility and hatred, but as a source of evil and danger which awakens compassion and benevolent regard.

Jesus Christ expressed it exactly, when he saw before him the crowded city of Jerusalem, standing out upon its hills in beauty and grandeur,—and then looking forward a few short years, beheld, with his prophetic eye, the flames bursting forth from its thousand dwellings, and roaring around the walls of the temple of God. He expressed exactly the feeling I have been attempting to describe, when he said, with the most heartfelt sorrow, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how gladly would I have protected thee, but thou wouldst not." It was the city which had killed the prophets, and stoned the messengers from heaven; and the time was drawing nigh, when he himself was to be led forth from the gates, condemned to death. But there was no malignant satisfaction in the Savior's heart, as he looked forward to its approaching overthrow. The just retribution for her awful crimes, he mourned over, as a destruction which he would gladly have stayed.

Now the danger is, that the Christian, in his efforts to promote the moral welfare of the community, will sometimes, while he retains the tone, and the language, and the appearance belonging to the latter of these feelings, gradually allow his heart to come under the unhallowed dominion of the former. Baffled, perhaps, in some of our well-intended plans, by the ingenuity, or the superior power of wicked men, we find it hard to avoid the feelings of vexation and anger, which opposition generally awakens in the human soul; and the enterprise which began as an honest effort to do good to fellow sinners, gradually becomes an imbittered contest for victory over foes. We do not perceive the change. We are blind to the new feelings which have obtained the mastery in our hearts. We do not much alter, perhaps, the language or appearances by which the spirit that actuates us is exhibited; but the change, though superficially not very striking, is radical, and ruinous in regard to all hope of success. We lose by it, the only two means by which we can accomplish any

thing here,—the moral power of honest, simple-hearted piety,—and the blessing of God. For a thousand instances have shown, that he will abandon even his own cause, the moment that efforts to promote it, degenerate into a contest for victory between man and man.

8. Consider what is the real avenue by which Christian principle is to gain an access to the great community, and an influence over its moral condition. It is the public conscience. There is a public conscience, as well as a public opinion;* and this moral sense of the community is at once the great protector of public virtue, and the great ally and supporter of those who labor to promote it. It is the public conscience which we must arouse from her slumbers,—it is she who can alone open to us, the brazen doors of the great castle of public sin. She is our confederate, our only efficient aid. She only can speak so as to command attention,—she only, where Christian principle is wanting, can restrain, at all, the mighty struggles of human passion, or the deliberate excesses of habitual sin.

The sympathy of man with man, is shown in nothing more strongly, than in the moral sentiments. A cruel master, we will suppose, punishes his apprentice with undue severity, and a simple statement of the case is published in a newspaper, accompanied by an expression of just, but calm indignation at the wrong. That statement, and that expression, though enforced perhaps by no argument, and exhibiting no new moral truths, awakens the moral sensibilities of the whole community around, in respect to the guilt of cruelty to a helpless boy, and though the whole story may perhaps soon be forgotten, the influence of it will hold back the hand of many a cruel master, for months or years.

It is on the same principle, that so great effects have been produced in the United States within a few years, in

* Chalmer's Bridgewater Treatise

curtailing the use of Alcohol, in its various forms, as an article of common consumption. It is not so much the power of the argument, it is not the result of the economical calculations, it is not the influence of self interest, or of political management, or of popular declamation, that have produced the effect:—it is, on the other hand, the simple exhibition of facts, and the expression of certain moral principles in their application to them, which have awakened the conscience and quickened moral sensibility, and spread by sympathy, from heart to heart. This has been the great source of the power whose efforts have been so extensive; it is the power of one conscience, acting strongly, and expressing its action, to awaken another, until the moral sensibilities of a whole community, closely united as they are by this mysterious sympathy, vibrate in unison, and pronounce one mighty sentence of condemnation against the sin which has awakened its voice.

It was in the same way, that the great victory over the slave trade, that worst daughter of the worst of mothers, slavery, was obtained in Great Britain a quarter of a century ago. The men who carried on that movement, would have been weakness and helplessness itself without their mighty ally. They knew where their great strength lay; and they directed their efforts to awakening the moral sense of the community, to the end that it might pronounce a sentence of condemnation against the system; not as a suffrage against an inexpedient political institution, but as a moral condemnation of a great public wrong.

This is one great secret of all moral power. The decisions of one conscience, freely and calmly made,—and calmly and kindly, though decidedly expressed, will quicken the decisions of another; and to awaken, and cultivate, and concentrate this moral sense of the community, is the great work by which we are to preserve its general moral health, and undermine great public sins. In accomplishing

this, every caution should be observed to avoid all which can interfere with this work. If by the excesses of our zeal, our exaggerated statements, our censorious or dictatorial tone, our violence, our lukewarmness, our illogical reasoning, our overbearing measures, or petty management, or any other errors, we give just ground for censure against ourselves, we defeat our own aim. The public mind, glad of an excuse for turning away from its own guilt, makes a sally against our errors; and the conscience which we were endeavoring to arouse, falls asleep again, while the ingenuity and the satire, or the more malignant hostility of the wicked, is occupied in discharging its arrows at *us*. We do not mean to imply by this, that such hostility can always be avoided, but only, that so far as we excite it by what is really wrong in our spirit or measures, we close the door in the most effectual manner, against the only influences by which our cause can be saved.

9. After all, however, it is comparatively little which the Christian community can do beyond its own bounds; and our great work, therefore, is to expand those bounds as rapidly as possible, and to purify and perfect all that is within them. True piety,—consisting as it does, in honest obedience to God, and heartfelt benevolence towards man, will do its work in securing human happiness as fast and far as it can go itself. It is but a penumbra,—a twilight, of virtue and happiness, which can, by the best of efforts, be carried beyond. We toil to alter human institutions,—forms of government,—modes of religious organization,—or systems of social economy, where we find them bearing heavily upon the welfare or the happiness of men. We forget that it is human depravity which gives to human institutions all their efficiency in evil, and while the depravity remains, it matters little in what forms it tyrannizes over the rights and happiness of men. A despotic

monarch can do no more mischief than a tyrannical democracy; in fact, on the catalogue of human despots, arranged in the order of injustice and cruelty, a Republican Committee of Safety would come first, and Nero would have to follow. Where there is cold-blooded depravity in power at the head, and corruption in the mass below, no matter for the forms. So in the church,—the worldly spirit which in England would make a bishop an ambitious politician, or a country pastor an idle profligate,—would in America, under a more democratic organization, show itself in factious struggles between contending parties, or in the wild fanaticism of a religious demagogue. All this does not show that it is of no consequence how our ecclesiastical or political forms are arranged, but only that we are in danger of overrating that consequence, and that our great work is to spread the influence of genuine individual piety every where. This alone can go to the root of the evil. The thing to be done, is, not to go on changing institutions, in the vain hope of finding some form which will work well, while depravity administers it,—but to root out depravity, and then almost any one will work well. We should accordingly learn to look without jealousy and dislike upon the political institutions of other countries, even if they do not correspond with our own theoretical notions. The theories of the reflecting portion of the community, have but little to do with moulding their institutions; they are regulated by circumstances over which any one generation has but little control. Why, for example, should England quarrel with America for being a republic? If she had wished to be a monarchy, where, I ask, could she have found a king? It requires many centuries to lay any firm foundations for a throne. And why should America quarrel with England because she is a monarchy? Her present constitution of government is an undesigned

result of the growth of centuries, that no combination of human powers, which it is possible to effect in a single generation, can safely change.

It is then the spread of individual virtue, and the cultivation of the moral sense of the community, which is to mitigate the evils that now oppress mankind. This will alleviate individual sufferings, and soften the asperities of intercourse between man and man, and render more mild and gentle, the pressure of government and the necessary restraints of law. Public virtue must be the great means of extending free institutions, by relaxing every where the grasp of power; for political power must be based on public opinion. As we have shown before, a certain degree of regard for life, and property, and of public order, is necessary to the very existence of society,—and the degree of power on the part of the sovereign, necessary to secure this, public opinion will always tolerate and support. Where there is, in any community, a vast amount of degradation and vice, there will be tolerated a sufficient degree of military power and of governmental restriction, to keep it under control. Where, on the other hand, the community is virtuous and peaceful, government, whatever may be its forms, must, insensibly, and by the influence of moral causes more powerful than bayonets or cannon, gradually relax its hold. We see the exemplification of this, every where. In France, for example, where vital piety scarcely lingers,—what a machinery of power has been necessary to preserve the public order. What passports,—what a police,—what a gendarmerie! How completely is the whole community, in all its ramifications, under the espionage and the grasp of governmental power; by a system, which public opinion not only tolerates, but sustains, knowing that without it, public tranquillity could perhaps not be preserved a day. And yet in New England, a man may spend his days, and scarcely perceive any

signs of a government,—and certainly not feel its pressure personally, from his cradle to his grave. It is the public conviction of its necessity, which sustains the system in the one case, and it is its manifest uselessness, which dispenses with it in the other. It is thus, that public vice is always the origin and the supporter of despotism. It is the very foundation of its throne. Banditti upon the highways are invaluable auxiliaries to its cause, and every insurrection in the provinces, or riot in the city, adds to the number of its bayonets, and supplies ammunition for its cannon. And when despotism is thus established, revolution is no remedy. It may shift the power to oppress, from one hand to another, but there can be no effectual or permanent mitigation of it, but virtue and self control, on the part of the governed.

We ought also to remark, before concluding the discussion of this chapter, that it relates to measures adopted by Christians, as such,— i. e. as members of the kingdom of Christ, in a world in heart opposed to him. The duties of the Christian *as a citizen*, we do not now wish here to discuss. He is a citizen of the state, as well as others, and all the responsibilities and duties of citizenship belong to him fully. While he should most sedulously guard against an assuming or a dictatorial spirit, and avoid all manœuvring and intrigue, and keep his heart free from party spirit, and lust of office and power,—he should still be vigilant, and faithful, and punctual, in discharging all the duties which the constitution of his country imposes upon him. And whatever share of influence he may properly exert directly, in respect to the political administration of his government, that he is bound to exert, in favor of such men and such measures as will promote the highest and most permanent public good. If all are faithful in the discharge of these obligations, then just so far as personal piety extends, so far will the social and political condition of man be improved, and this is the only

sure and safe mode of progress. This subject, however, we do not now propose to go into, but only to consider the extent in which the Christian community, as such, may hope to exert a good influence upon the mass of mind around it.

The work of the Christian, then, in this world, is mainly with individuals,—his object is to promote the spread of personal, individual piety,—the highest, in its standard, and the most extensive in its range. Then let this piety thoroughly inter-penetrate the whole mass of society, and mingle every where, with mind, so as to bring the insensible, unobtrusive, but most powerful influence of its presence, to act upon the whole mass by which it is surrounded. It must not stand aloof. It must be separate from the world in character, not in condition, it must sustain the most friendly, business and social relations with all mankind,—and by a sort of interfusion with the mass, carry its influence every where. While, however, piety goes thus, like the Savior, wherever there is sin, she must, like him, keep herself unspotted from its contamination,—firm and unyielding in her lofty principles, and pure in her own heavenly spirit. While she is kind, she must be decided; —conciliatory and unobtrusive, while she is consisent and firm. Clothed in her own alluring garb, she must exhibit the moral beauty of obedience to God and benevolence towards man, and thus, while she wins multitudes to sincere repentance and eternal life, she will gently, but powerfully, restrain the guilt and assuage the sorrows of the vast multitudes which yet continue in their sins.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN UNION.

"Diversities of administrations, but the same Lord."

Notwithstanding the immense importance which may justly be attached to private, individual effort, in the work of Doing Good, we must not pass slightly over another great and important topic,—union and co-operation. Jesus Christ did not merely make arrangements for the spread of personal piety from heart to heart,—*he founded a church.* He took measures for concentrating the moral power which he introduced, and for linking together his followers, by ties which formed at once their strength and their protection. But the human heart, always ready to find some door of escape where it may go astray, and especially always prone to slip away from what is spiritual, to what is external, has perverted our Savior's original design, until at length, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, the arrangement which was intended by him, to establish for ever, union and harmony, has resulted in the very extreme of separation and division.

It is not, however, the number of distinct ecclesiastical organizations now existing, that constitutes the main evil, —it is the spirit of dissension and jealousy, not to say hostility, which separates them from one another. For example, a comparatively small degree of inconvenience or injury would result, perhaps, from the arrangement, by which the church of Scotland, stands a different organization from the church of England,—each having its own officers, its own rules and its own usages, and thus each being independent of the other,—provided the two would occupy their respective parts of the vineyard, as distinct, but friendly divisions of the same great family,—each enjoying the confidence and affection of the other. In the

same manner, there might be little inconvenience or injury from having a Methodist and a Congregational church in the same city, in which case the respective fields of the two organizations would be marked off, not by territorial limits, but by the different tastes, or habits, or pursuits of different classes of the community. We do not say that it would be better to have two such organizations of the Savior's followers, rather than one,—but only that it would not be *much* worse, were it not for a spirit of dissension and hostility between them. If the portions into which the church is divided, were friendly families, nearly all the evils of the division would disappear, and there would be some great advantages to balance those which should remain. But instead of being friendly families, they are, in fact, too often hostile tribes, expending quite as much of their ammunition upon one another, as upon the common enemy; so that the evil consists, not so much in the lines of demarcation, by which the great body of believers are separated, as in the brazen walls of jealousy, and mistrust, and excommunication, which are erected on these lines It is these last which make the mischief.

The cause of our difficulty seems to be the tendency of mankind to run into an inordinate attachment to forms. Forms are something distinct and tangible, and associations of interest and attachment cling to them easily and strongly. Then again, the religious usages to which we are ourselves accustomed, are the ones which are in our minds when we read the Scriptures, and we associate them with the directions and descriptions given there, so strongly, as at length insensibly to imbibe the belief, that these very usages were the ones referred to and practised in those days; each reader thus making his own accidental experience a part of his interpretation. Thus the officer or the ordinance which we read of, is always the officer or the ordinance which we are accustomed to; just as every farmer's child, when reading the story of the babe in the

manger, always pictures to himself a scene from his own father's barn. Then, besides, there is party spirit, a form of human depravity, not slow to show itself in the most sacred relations of the soul. We love to have our party prosper, and so we are ardent and zealous for the interests of our own pale; for thus, by the self delusion which is the inveterate and perpetual characteristic of sin, we can have the satisfaction of thinking that our ardor is for the cause of God, while in fact, we are only glorifying ourselves. And of all the inaccessible and impregnable fortresses of sin, this is certainly the worst. Human selfishness and pride are firm and immovable enough, when open and undisguised; —and real, devoted love to God, too, will sometimes stand its ground well;—but when pride, and selfishness, and party zeal clothe themselves with the garb of pretended piety, and do it so adroitly as to deceive their very victim, you have headstrong, unmanageable and indomitable obstinacy personified. The pride and selfishness of party spirit which constitute the real spring, are far within, protected by the superficial covering, from all attack and all exposure. This kind of character is found in every denomination of Christians, and it is the spirit which this diffuses and creates, that gives all its acrimony to the division of the church; which division might otherwise be considered as an amicable arrangement, intended to accommodate Christianity in its external forms, to the changing events, and tastes, and habits of different ages and climes.

There are two modes by which the Christian church may attempt to promote a state of greater harmony. One is, for each denomination to struggle to bring all the others upon its own ground,—which plan has been, for some time, in the course of trial, and the result of the experiment thus far, is, that the opposing forces, of the contending parties, neutralize each other, and the only result which remains, is a gradual thickening of the walls, and raising of the battlements, and strengthening of the bulwarks by

which they are separated. I need not say that I have no intention, in this chapter, of engaging in this work.

The other plan is, while we leave each of the great divisions of the Christian family in the peaceful occupancy of its own ground, to endeavor to diminish, and ultimately to destroy, the walls of jealousy and dislike which separate them. The way to do this, is for us to learn to attach less importance to these differences. This we shall easily do, if we look into the bible, with an honest desire to understand the real place which forms and modes of organization occupy there.

It was one of the most admirable provisions made to secure the spread of religion in such a world as this, that it was not left as a mere general principle, to work its way itself among mankind. Jesus Christ not only taught the principles of piety,—but he took measures for the founding of a church. He provided for the embodying of his followers in united bands, and he showed by this arrangement, his knowledge of a principle which the philosophers of those days were not shrewd enough to discover. And, as a distinguished writer has observed, if he had contented himself with merely teaching Christianity, without founding a church, the results of his labors could not have been expected, on human probabilities, to have survived his death by a single century. Yes; the union, the regular organization of the disciples of Christ, is an essential part of the plan of Christianity. To make each individual Christian isolated and solitary in such a world as this, would be almost as ruinous as the disbanding of an army upon the field of battle. It is not therefore, the necessity of an organization, itself, but the precise form and method in which the organization is effected, that we are prone to over-estimate. While the latter, the mode and form of organization has been continually fluctuating from the days of Abraham to the present hour, the former, the necessity of organized union itself, has remained, during all these

centuries unchanged, and must remain fixed and immovable as long as human nature continues as it is.

He, however, who honestly wishes to know the will of God in respect to this subject, will find, in looking carefully into it, a great many very striking evidences, that the particular modes and forms by which the organization of good men in this world is effected, assume, in the divine counsels, a very subordinate and secondary place. And let me remind the reader, before I proceed to mention some of these evidences, that we are all exposed to a very strong bias, while looking at them. We have ourselves been educated in one Christian communion,—accustomed, for many years, to one system, and the usages which have thus become so familiar to us, have entwined themselves around our hearts, and linked with themselves all our most sacred associations. All this is well. It is perfectly right, that we should cling with feelings of interest and attachment to what we have loved and venerated so long. But then it is hard for us to distinguish, between what is thus hallowed to us, as individuals, from the circumstances of our past history, and what is absolutely enjoined, by the word of God, and which we are accordingly to insist upon from others. But we ought to distinguish between them. While we cling, with as strong an attachment as we please, to the institutions, whose happy influence we have enjoyed for years,—until our religious sentiments and feelings are inextricably interwoven with them,—we should still be willing to open our eyes to the distinction between what we have thus ourselves justly learned to love, and what God has absolutely enjoined upon all. While, then, I bring forward the indications, that God considers the particular mode by which his friends are organized, as of secondary and subordinate importance, give them, reader, a candid hearing; and remember, that they are not intended to diminish your attachment to the institutions which you love, but only to increase your indulgence for those who, by

precisely the same causes, are led to love institutions somewhat different from yours.

In the examination of this subject, then, we shall endeavor to throw some light upon the degree of importance, which God attaches to the particular forms of government and discipline, under which his people are united, by the establishment of the following propositions.

1. Forms of ecclesiastical organization, while they were under the special direction of God, in ancient days, were not fixed and permanent, but were *changed continually*, according to the exigencies of the times. These changes continued down to the close of the scripture history.

2. The forms, which were in use at the close of the scripture history, were only usages *incidentally introduced*, from time to time, and not adopted as a system deliberately arranged and established, once for all.

3. The *description* of these usages is very indistinct and incomplete.

4. The apostles were not strict and uniform in the observance of them.

5. Their present authority rests on *the mere practice of good men*, in early times, which is nowhere in the Scriptures made binding.

6. The most complete system which can be drawn from these records of early practice, is *not at all sufficient for the present wants of the church.*

7. The union of Christians, under any one consolidated ecclesiastical government, must be highly dangerous, if not fatal to the cause of true piety.

8. God sanctions, by the influences of his Holy Spirit, the existence and the operations of all those denominations of Christians, whatever may be their forms, whose faith and practice correspond with his Word.

These propositions we now proceed to consider.

I. Forms of ecclesiastical organization, while they con-

tinued under the special direction of God, in ancient days, were not fixed and permanent, but were continually changed, to meet the emergencies of the times.

God has always had a body of true and faithful friends in the world, and he might have adopted a plan for uniting them, *from the beginning*, in a church with prescribed and permanent forms of government and worship. In fact, if he had entertained the views on this subject, which the Christian church is prone to entertain, at the present day, he would have done so. Abraham and Melchisedec would have been joined into a regular church, with rules for government and worship, which should have been exactly prescribed, and made the model for all succeeding generations. But instead of such a plan, God has made the precise mode of union as changeable, as the varying circumstances of every age. In Abraham's time, the faithful constituted simply a *family*, governed by patriarchal rules, and offering a very simple worship. In the time of Moses, *circumstances* change, and the whole ecclesiastical arrangements of his people change with them. We have the church and the state not merely united, but absolutely identified,—governed by very peculiar rules and usages, which were evidently not only temporary, but from their very nature, limited and local. In the days of Joshua, the church, which was before a moving state, takes the new character of an invading army; and military rules, military customs, and military movements, very seriously affect and modify all the arrangements of the government and worship of the church of God. The whole Levitical system, planned and minutely described by Jehovah himself, was local and temporary,—confined necessarily to one small nation, occupying a spot scarcely discernible on the map of the world, and limited by the very termination, which God himself intended for it, to a few hundred years.

If the reader should say that there were peculiar reasons,

arising out of the circumstances of the occasion, why a local and a temporary ecclesiastical arrangement should be made for the Jews, he would be doubtless correct, and would come to what is, unquestionably, the true principle, viz. that in respect to ecclesiastical forms, it always has been God's design, to regard the *circumstances of the case*, in the regulation of them. With the view, which *we* are prone to entertain, we should have placed church government and the forms of worship, on a fixed and permanent basis, at the very beginning,—making the system go on unchanged from generation to generation,—pursuing its steady and unalterable way over monarchies and republics, in civilized and savage life, still the same in every age, and among all nations, languages, and realms. But God in the most systematic, and formal, and minutely detailed ecclesiastical arrangement which he ever made, only intended it for one single province, and for a few centuries; and in effect, he swept it all away himself, by a foreign invasion, long before the time arrived which was appointed for its close.

We will not stop to notice, how different the state of the church of God must have been in the time of the captivity, —nor the changes which took place on the return, when the introduction of the synagogue modified the whole plan of public worship. We pass on to the Savior's day, when the constitution of the church was totally different from what it ever was before, or has been since. It may be given thus.

1. Twelve apostles.
2. Seventy itinerant ministers, travelling two and two.
3. One treasurer.
4. No local churches.
5. Meetings in the open air.
6. Ministry supported by the voluntary contributions and hospitality of its friends.
7. Funds of the ministry in common.
8. No lay organization whatever.

And even these arrangements seem not to have been made as the result of any settled plan; measures were adopted to suit emergencies, and the above was the result. If Jesus Christ had entertained the views which are very common now in every denomination of Christians, one of the first things which would have attracted his attention, would have been the work of settling the constitution of the Christian church The forms of government, discipline, and worship, would have been fixed and minutely described, for the guidance of his followers, in all future time. But he could not have entertained such views; for he took a totally different course. He adopted, for the time being, such measures as suited his own purposes,—which were as peculiar as the circumstances in which he was placed; and when he left the world, and the circumstances under which he acted were changed, the whole ecclesiastical polity, which was founded on them, was changed too.

For after the lapse of a very few years from the death of Christ, the reader of the New Testament finds himself surrounded by quite a different system of religious institutions. We have then,

1. A ministry, sometimes itinerant and sometimes stationary.
2. Seven deacons.
3. Local churches.
4. Somewhat regular ordination.
5. Ecclesiastical councils.
6. An enumeration of four or five different officers, not including deacons, viz. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.*
7. In some sense, and to some extent, not however very distinctly defined, a community of goods.

* Ephesians 4: 11. "And he (i. e. Christ) gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, &c.

Apostolic arrangements provisional.

We will not follow the history of God's people any farther, to show that the forms of their organization have been continually changing since then, for the reader might insist that all subsequent changes, have been unauthorized and wrong. But, after looking at the facts which we have just stated, no one can deny that so long as God himself, exercised a direct control over the external arrangements made by his people, he changed them continually, according to the exigencies of the times. And this seems to show that while he may attach great importance to organized combination itself, he must regard the particular mode, by which it is to be effected, as of secondary and subordinate account.

II. The forms which are introduced at the close of the scripture history, grew out of usages incidentally introduced, from time to time. They were not adopted as a system deliberately arranged and established, once for all.

It is remarkable how entirely *provisional*, as statesmen term it, were all the ecclesiastical arrangements, made by the apostles. That is, the most important parts of their system, were introduced in succession,—*on emergencies*,—to answer particular and often temporary purposes, instead of having been framed as a whole, with a general view to the permanent and universal wants of the church. The disciples did not come together after the ascension, as we, in modern times, should very probably have done, to form a constitution for the church, wisely framed and adjusted, to cover the whole ground. No. They went to their work at once, giving their whole souls to the preaching of the gospel; and, as from time to time emergencies arose, requiring new arrangements, they met the cases as they occurred. For example, they did not make a general rule, that all important appointments should be made by election, and provide, by rule, for the contingency of two prominent candidates, in such elections. But when they came together, to fill

Judas's place, they concluded, *in that case*, to elect, and when they found, that there were two principal candidates, they concluded, *in that case*, to decide by lot. Did they intend this to be a precedent, to govern the mode of Christian elections in all coming time?

After awhile, an emergency occurred, requiring aid for the apostles in a certain business, altogether peculiar to that age and country, and they determined to appoint seven deacons, with special reference to that emergency. So the rules of ordination were not adopted as general rules; but when the churches wished to send Paul and Barnabas on a foreign mission, they ordained them *to that work*;* and when Paul left Titus in Crete, he gave him, Titus, directions about ordaining elders in that particular island, Crete. On one occasion a question arose, which it seemed difficult to settle, and a general consultation was agreed upon. This formed the first council. It was called, not as the first regular meeting of a body organized as a model for all coming times, but as a special assembly, resorted to for a temporary and single emergency. It will be found by reading the book of the Acts, that all the ecclesiastical arrangements of the Apostles, were made in this way; they were not adopted at once, as a whole; they were not the results of a deliberate plan to frame a system for themselves and posterity; they were provisional, temporary arrangements, resorted to successively, at distant intervals of time, to aid them in existing emergencies, and to remove difficulties as they occurred. This does not, indeed, prove that we have nothing, in these days, to do with the example of the early Christians, but it does prove, most certainly, that they entertained views very different from those which often prevail in this age of the world, in respect to the nature and province of ecclesiastical forms.

* We shall hereafter see that they had both been regular and acknowledged ministers sometime before this ordination.

Description of usages.	Levitical law.	Fourth commandment.

III. The description of these usages is very indistinct and incomplete.

The knowledge we gain of them, is not given in any formal and methodical description, but in incidental allusions, scattered through the Acts and the Epistles. This is indicative of the degree of importance attached to them by the sacred writers. Contrast it with the methodical and systematic manner, in which the various subjects connected with religious *truth*, are exhibited in the Epistle to the Romans, or that in which practical *duty* in all the relations of life, is drawn out and enforced in other epistles; and this, too, when it must be admitted by common consent, that forms of government, more than any thing else, if intended to be binding, must be precise, and minute, and exact in all their specifications. God has himself given us one example of this, in the statutes relating to ecclesiastical government and modes of worship among the Jews. There is a model. The Holy Spirit, in dictating the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, recognized the necessity of being minute, and particular, and specific in the extreme, in a record of forms, which were intended to be binding even upon one nation, and for a limited time. But, when at length, these forms came to be abrogated, and a spiritual religion came to take their place, we have, instead of the methodical and well digested system clearly described,—only incidental allusions to the practice of individuals, in the peculiar emergencies in which they were placed.

There is the institution of the Sabbath too, which, in respect to the distinctness with which its enactment and observance is announced, shows us how specific and direct God's commands are, when they enjoin external observances, on which he really lays a stress. Announced in general terms as universally binding, at the creation, and then,—as soon as the state of society made written records of value,—placed upon stone, in language definite and

exact, almost to legal technicality, it stands a model of legislative precision. Read the fourth commandment, and then collect together and read, all that is said of the mode of Christian ordination, or the orders of the ministry, and note the contrast.

We do not here say how far this ought to influence us, but, certainly, no candid man can deny that it is worthy of consideration, and should seriously affect, to some degree, at least, our views of the proper place of forms in the Christian system.

IV. The apostles were not strict and uniform in the observance of these usages.

We might show this at length, if time and space would allow, by going into a full examination of the ecclesiastical arrangements of the early church, and showing, in detail, how changeable and fluctuating they were. It will, however, be sufficient to take a specimen, especially if we take some one so conspicuous and important in its character, that we may safely reason from that to the others.

There is, for example, ordination: for we might expect that if punctilious uniformity were to be insisted on, in any ecclesiastical forms, it would be in the mode of induction to the sacred office. And we find accordingly, that a very prominent and important place is assigned to this rite, in our discussions at the present day. We select it, however, here, not with any reference to these discussions, but only as a conspicuous and proper specimen of the whole class of ceremonial observances to which it belongs.

In the first place, we may safely infer a great deal, in respect to the importance attached to the mere *mode* of induction to the sacred office, from the manner in which the whole subject of the ordination of the twelve apostles is dismissed, with the words, "And he ordained twelve." Just think of the occasion,—think of the men, their num-

ber, the position they occupied, conspicuous and important beyond all others,—and then consider, how imposing and solemn would have been the ceremony, and how detailed a description would have been given of it, if the views and feelings of modern times, on such a subject, had been entertained by our Savior. Instead of this, it is simply said, "And he ordained twelve;" language, which, according to the opinion of the ablest commentators, means only that he appointed them, set them apart, without at all implying any ceremonial observance whatever, in inducting them into office.

In the succeeding portions of the New Testament, the ordaining of the apostles and preachers, who were successively added to the original number, is very seldom alluded to. Contrast this with the prominence given to the time and the place, and all the circumstances of the ordination of a Christian minister, in modern biography. The prominence given to this solemnity in modern times, we do not complain of as at all too great. A distinct and special preparation, a formal examination, and an induction into office, by appropriate ceremonies, are altogether more necessary, to guard against improper admissions to it now, in a community where all are professedly Christian, than they were in apostolic days, when a simple desire to preach the gospel, was almost, of itself, proof of competence and honesty. The various ceremonial observances, by which different denominations have, in modern times, guarded the entrances to the gospel ministry, are thus highly necessary, but we ought to understand, that the necessity arises out of the circumstances of modern times, and not out of any binding obligation in favor of the precise forms, which we respectively adopt, arising from apostolic practices.

There is much light thrown upon this subject, by the case of the Apostle Paul. He seems not to have been ordained at all upon his first entrance into the ministry. Immediately upon his conversion, he went, at once, to

preaching the Gospel at Damascus, and it was three years before he had opportunity even "to confer with flesh and blood," as he terms it, referring to the other apostles, from whom, according to our theories, he could alone have derived any proper authority to preach.

But, the reader will say, that, as Paul had an interview with the Savior himself, he derived his authority directly from him, and that there was no need of ordination in his case. This is undoubtedly true, and it shows at once, without farther reasoning, exactly in what light the Founder of Christianity regards forms; as important indeed, but important as a means, not as an end. For here, where the spiritual title was so sure, the Savior was content to waive the ceremony. If now he had intended to enforce upon all succeeding times, the indispensable necessity of any particular ceremonial conditions of induction into the ministry, what an admirable occasion offered itself, in the case of Paul, to show this, and to teach the lesson to all future ages. Instead of authorizing him, at once, to preach the gospel, suppose he had enjoined him to wait until he should return to Jerusalem, and there be regularly inducted into office, according to the principles of ordination which had been established for the church. This would have been, according to the known practice of our Savior, in all cases of forms, really binding. The parents of the Savior, under divine direction, took him to the temple, when he was eight years old, and conformed exactly to all the Mosaic ceremonies of circumcision and sacrifice. Those ceremonial laws were then in force, and the exalted dignity of the Savior was made no plea of exemption. When he cured the leper, he said to him,* "Go show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." What! shall the man whom Jesus Christ had cleansed, find it necessary to go and secure a ceremonial purification, according to the law of

* Luke 5: 14.

Moses? Yes. And why? That he might show that the Son of God, exalted in rank and character as he is, will give the sanction of his example, to conformity with even ceremonial law, when he comes within its jurisdiction. On this principle, he attended worship at the synagogues, he paid his taxes, he ate the passover, and his whole story shows that he would have been the last to have dispensed, on such an occasion as this, with any of the forms which he had really established as essential modes of regulation for the Christian church.

Perhaps the reader may maintain, in order to avoid the force of the foregoing reasoning, that Paul's interview with Ananias, when the latter laid his hands upon him, immediately after his conversion, was his ordination to the work of the ministry. The account is given in the 9th chapter of the Acts,—but it is expressly stated, that the object of this laying on of hands, was not to induct him into the ministry, but that he might receive his sight. And then, besides, the ceremony was actually before his baptism. Can any contender for regularity in forms suppose, that Paul was ordained a minister of the gospel before he was baptized?

Besides, Paul was long after ordained, when he was sent forth as a missionary with Barnabas at Antioch, as recorded, Acts 13 : 2, 3. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." This, it must be observed, was after both of them had been for a long time most active and efficient preachers of the gospel, of universally acknowledged authority. With the views so often entertained in modern times, respecting ordination in a prescribed mode, as the only proper induction to the duties of the Christian ministry, how can this case be explained?

The case of Apollos, too, is remarkable. He was born

in Alexandria, and came to Ephesus, preaching repentance and a coming Savior. Eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, his preaching had great power, but so far from having been regularly ordained by the apostles,—"*he knew only the baptism of John.*" While, however, he was thus preaching all that he had learned of the truth, Aquila and Priscilla met with him. And what did they do? Did they remonstrate with him, for pretending to preach without apostolic ordination? Did they remonstrate,—did they try to silence him? No. They took him unto them, and "expounded the way of God more perfectly," and then bid him go on. They gave him letters of introduction to the churches in Achaia, exhorting the disciples to receive him.* And in the same manner, we shall find in regard to a large proportion of the early preachers, that there is no record or account of their ordination as ministers of the gospel, whatever. Whereas, if it had been intended that the church should, in all coming times, comply with certain conditions of ordination, as essential to the proper exercise of the duties of the Christian ministry, there certainly would have been good care taken, to show that they were complied with then.

We have taken the ceremony of ordination, only, as a conspicuous specimen. Almost any of the other forms connected with the organization of the church, might have been taken just as well. And, let me repeat here, that these considerations do not at all go to the undermining or disturbing the regular ordinances of the Christian church, as now administered, by the various denominations of our day. These views, if we adopt them, will not diminish our attachment to the forms of our own church, for the regular and appropriate administration of its government; they will only lead us to cease to look with jealousy and distrust upon the forms and principles adopted by other denominations, varying somewhat from ours.

* See the whole account, in the close of the 18th chapter of the Acts.

Apostolic practice not infallible.

V. The present authority of these usages, rests only on the mere practice of good men in early times, which is nowhere in the Scriptures made binding.

It is evident, that Apostolic practice was not always under divine direction, and, if we attempt to make it an infallible guide, we have no positive means of knowing when it was, and when it was not. In some cases, it is distinctly stated that the conduct of the Apostles was directed by the Holy Spirit. For instance, in the case of sending Paul and Barnabas on their first mission, "*The Holy Ghost* said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul," &c. And so in another case; "They assayed to go into Bithynia, but *the Spirit suffered them not.*" The interference of a divine influence, seems to be mentioned in these cases, as special,—extraordinary. At any rate, we know perfectly well, that in many of the acts of their administration, these holy men were not under divine guidance. Of this, the case of contention, which occurred between Barnabas and Saul, is a melancholy proof. The question in that case, was, it is true, only a question of private, individual action; but then there were other cases, where the apostles were evidently left to their own judgment and discretion, in regard to the most important measures of the church. The case described in Galatians 2: 11—13.* is a very striking one of this sort. The question related to the course which should be taken with the Gentile converts, in regard to the obligations of the old Jewish law. It involved the vital subject of the connection between the old dispensation and the new, and the manner in which the latter should be ingrafted upon the former. There could scarcely be named a sub-

* But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas, also, was carried away with their dissimulation.

ject, connected with the external forms of Christianity, more fundamental than this. Yet Peter, Peter himself, the very apostle to whom the gospel of circumcision was specially committed,* was left to err in regard to it, and to take an altogether wrong course. His error led Barnabas astray, and Paul comes in and sharply reproves him before them all. With such a case as this, on record, we certainly cannot maintain the infallibility of apostolic practice.

We ought to make a clear distinction between the *truths*, which sacred writers have recorded, and the *actions*, which they performed. This distinction is not always made. We confound the inspiration of the *writings*, contained in the Scriptures, with the inspiration of the *conduct*, of those who penned them. Now it is the Scriptures, that is, the written records of truth, which are our only rule of faith and practice. The actual measures adopted in those days, are totally distinct, and it is, we believe, nowhere claimed by the sacred writers, that their actions, (whether in their private conduct, or in their administration of the affairs of the church,) are an infallible guide for us. In fact, if we read the New Testament attentively, with a view to this point, we shall be satisfied that the Apostles, in their administration of the church, acted for themselves, and for their own times, not expecting that their conduct would be regarded as a binding precedent for all future ages. In their record, whether of historical events, or of revealed religious truth, they were infallibly guided; but in their actions, they were left to their own judgment and discretion,—subject, of course, to the influence of such general principles and truths, as had been revealed to them. Consequently, they went on, acting as occasion demanded; adopting such plans and measures, or applying such remedies as were called for, by the peculiar emergencies in which they were placed. Sometimes they were right, sometimes they were wrong,—sometimes they were checked in their proposed

* Gal. 2:7.

measures by a special interference of the Holy Spirit, sometimes they disagreed and even contended; and if we attempt to give to any of their measures the authority of a precedent, binding upon the church in all ages, we cannot possibly draw a line between what is thus authoritative, and what is not.

Still, we must not go to the other extreme, and disregard the examples they have set us. The practices and usages of the early Christians constitute the very best model, no doubt, for us to study and to imitate. They enjoyed the most favorable opportunities of knowing what would be agreeable to the will of their Master, and their hearts were warm with a devotedness to his cause, which must have led them to do his will, in the most strict and faithful manner. We ought therefore, to study their acts, and imitate the principles by which they were guided. But when we attempt to extend to their conduct, the infallibility which belongs only to their writings,—when we give to their measures and administration, an authority to bind all succeeding times, we insist upon what they never claimed for themselves, and what cannot, in theory, be supported, in the case of any scripture character whatever. Noah, David, Solomon, Daniel, Paul, Peter, and John, give abundant evidence that they were inspired as *penmen* alone.

The disposition thus to exalt the measures and administration adopted by the apostles, into precedents as binding upon our forms of organization, as their writings are upon our belief and moral conduct,—though it is thus utterly baseless and defenceless in theory,—steals insensibly over our minds, and exerts a powerful influence. In fact, we could not attach infallibility to apostolic practice as an avowed theory. Such a doctrine could not be maintained for an hour; but it insensibly creeps into our minds, and we find ourselves tacitly admitting, and silently acting upon that, which, as a distinctly stated proposition, we should immediately reject. I repeat it, that apostolic example is

of immense value and importance to us,—but it is not authoritative precedent, so that we are to reduce it to system, and force it upon every company of Christians on the globe, upon pain of excommunication. And yet this is the true secret of the divisions and jealousies, which prevail in the Christian world. The incidental, scattered, and imperfect allusions, which the Apostles made, to the measures they thought called for in their days, in which there is no evidence whatever, that they were infallibly guided, and which they probably never thought would be looked back upon as infallible precedents,—these allusions we search out and bring together,—we build up a great deal of meaning upon expressions very brief and few, and we mingle with the natural import of the record, the recollections and associations with which our own peculiar religious history has stored our minds,—and the complicated system which we thus form, we insist, is essential to Christianity.

VI. The most complete system which can be drawn from these records of early practice, is not at all sufficient for the present wants of the Church.

This is admitted by the fact, that every denomination in Christendom, has found it necessary in practice to eke out the scripture system by their own additions. If any very great stress had been laid upon the precise form of organization, under which the church was to exist in all ages, we should have expected that a complete and sufficient system would have been detailed, or at least exemplified, in the primitive model. Instead of this, the practice of every denomination in Christendom admits, that after all that the most persevering ingenuity can draw from the Scriptures, has been obtained, there must be many human additions to the edifice, to give it completion. The Congregationalist finds no authority in the Scriptures for his examining com-

mittee, nor for his articles of faith, nor for his system of licensing preachers, nor for his election of a pastor by concurrence of church and society, nor for his associations, or his consociations, or his conferences. And yet these things may all be right,—they are the best modes which he can devise for accomplishing very important purposes, and for which the directions as to forms, left us in the New Testament, make no provision. And how can we account for their not having been provided for, if the precise regulation of forms had been considered by the sacred writers an object of very special importance.

The Episcopalian, too, is in the same case. He can find no authority or precedent in the Scriptures, and so far as we know, he pretends to find none, for his rite of confirmation, his consecration of buildings and grounds, his church wardens, his vestry, his liturgy, his saints' days, his archbishops, and lords primate, in one country, and his general conventions in another. We do not find fault with these arrangements, on account of there being no scripture authority for them. Though they are all human institutions and arrangements, they are very admirably adapted, most of them, to the purposes intended. And as the Holy Spirit allowed the Bible to be brought to a close, without giving any directions in regard to the very important objects which they aim at securing, the church is necessarily left to frame institutions for itself, to cover this ground. Every denomination has virtually acknowledged this, by resorting to plans and measures for which nothing like a prototype can be found in early ages. In fact, we are all compelled to do this, for many of the most immediate and imperious wants of the church, in respect to its government and discipline, seem to be left without any provision for them. If the sacred writers had felt that the precise mode in which Christianity is embodied in organized forms was of as much importance as we are often inclined to suppose, and if they had intended to frame a system for this purpose, and hand

it down as a model for all posterity, is it conceivable that they would have made no provision for the mode of supporting the gospel, or any of the temporalities of the church,—nor for the mode of electing or appointing pastors, nor for the examination of candidates, nor for the admission of members, nor for the trial and deposition of false teachers, nor for the management of missionary operations, nor for the erection and control of houses for public worship? In the Jewish law, points analogous to these, were most minutely and fully provided for, by ample specifications, for *there*, it was the intention to prescribe a form.

The reader may, perhaps, endeavor to avoid the conclusion to which these undeniable facts would lead him, by saying that all essential arrangements are made, and that it is things of secondary importance only, which are left to human discretion. This is, however, not so. Some of the particulars enumerated above, are of the very first importance, and provision for them is wholly omitted. Others, of very far less importance are prescribed. Compare, for instance, the mode of baptism, whether by sprinkling or immersion, with the mode of examining candidates for admission into the church, or the mode of choosing pastors, or collecting the support of the ministry. While we admit that the former, once prescribed, brings with it the most imperious obligation to conform to the prescription, yet certainly no one would imagine that that would be the thing selected as the one to be minutely fixed, while the others were to be left without any regulation. So that it is not the most important things which will be found on examination, that modern Christians maintain to have been enjoined.

Besides, we do not now make in practice, any such distinction, between what was originally required by the Apostles, and the human additions which have since been made. We put the human and the divine parts of the building together, and make one system which we insist upon as a

Possible perversion of these views.

whole. The use of liturgy is insisted upon as firmly, and considered as essential a condition of ministerial connection with the Episcopal church, as valid ordination. At least, according to the theory, no person can be a member of the true church of Christ, without adopting the one, as well as admitting the authority of the other, and the Catholic is not *less* tenacious, to say the least, of homage to the host, than of the observance of the Sabbath-day.

Though we cannot but be fully satisfied of the truth of these views, we are aware that, like all other truths, they are liable to be perverted through the almost incurable propensities of many minds, to run off into extremes. The considerations which we have adduced, show conclusively, that the precise forms and modes of administering ecclesiastical government are not prescribed,—hence, some persons will go by one of those leaps of ratiocination to which a crazy intellect is fully adequate, to the conclusion that all ceremony is unscriptural, and all steady forms of government and discipline, useless trammels upon spiritual freedom. And perhaps some may gravely insist, that they cannot perceive the distinction, between giving up the necessity of regular organization altogether, and denying that the precise forms under which it is to be effected, are minutely prescribed. And yet there is the marriage relation to furnish us with a striking and clear illustration of it. The necessity of a ceremony so arranged as to make sure the important points, such as the deliberate, settled intention of the parties, the voluntariness of it on both sides, and public opportunity for the presentation of valid objections, is admitted every where. The principles enjoined in the Word of God, virtually require this, and the practice of all Christian states recognise it. And yet, while this necessity is almost every where recognised, acknowledged, and acted upon, and these points almost every where secured, how endlessly various are the modes of securing them. Now these variations are of no great consequence,

provided that the points are secured. It is, for example, of not very material consequence whether the intention of marriage is made public by the voice of the town clerk, or by a posted notice on the church door, or by the publishing of the banns in an interval of the service, or by advertising in a newspaper,—provided that it is made public in some way or other; and provided, that some regular and prescribed form, is adopted in every community for securing it. One uniform mode for all nations and ages is not prescribed in the gospel,—but each nation and age is left to choose its own. It by no means follows from this, however, that any nation or age, is at liberty to abandon marriage ceremonies altogether. There is an obligation to take some proper ceremonial measures for securing certain essential points, but no obligation in respect to the precise form of the measures themselves.

In the same manner, the principles of the gospel require that the church should in all ages, make suitable ceremonial arrangements for the proper examination of candidates for admission to the church, and for the deliberate and solemn induction of pastors to the sacred office, and for the regular and orderly support of the Christian ministry; but while the obligation to see that some proper provision for these points is made, is imperious, there seems to be no authoritative precedent as to the precise form they shall assume. Thus, in respect to the candidate for admission to the communion of the church, the various branches of the church have made very different provisions. There is the Methodist class leader in one case, the Episcopal bishop with the right of confirmation in another, and the Congregational examining committee, and the Presbyterian session; all good and sufficient, but no scripture authority for any one of them. There are scripture principles requiring some one or other of them, or something equivalent, to guard the Christian church from universal corruption,—but there is no scripture precepts, specifying either

of these modes or any other, as the precise mode, by which these objects should be secured. It is, therefore, no valid ground of objection to the Episcopal rite of confirmation, for example, that the service was drawn up in the middle ages,—a human contrivance of modern times. It is true that it was so drawn up; it is true that that service is a human contrivance of modern times,—but it is a contrivance to accomplish a purpose which the principles of Christianity require us to accomplish, viz. the deliberate, and cautious, and solemn admission of members to the communion of the church,—while they have left us no prescription of the mode by which we should accomplish it; and we are consequently left to frame a service of confirmation, or to organize a church session, or appoint a committee, according to the circumstances and character of our age or country, and our own best discretion.

These remarks are necessary to show, that throughout the whole discussion contained in this chapter, nothing is intended to be said to undervalue the importance of proper and steady ceremonial regulations, in every branch of the church. Without these, the objects which the general principles of organization laid down in the gospel, require, cannot be secured. And as we have already remarked, the views exhibited in this chapter, will not, if we fully adopt them, diminish our attachment to the ceremonies of our own communion, nor weaken our conviction of the importance of regular and steady arrangements for the government and worship of the church. They will only convince us that it is only the general principles which the New Testament presses; and that as one branch of the church has, in the exercise of its own discretion, arranged the details of its government and discipline with reference to the wants of its own country and times, it ought not to be jealous at the exercise of the same discretionary power on the part of another.

Danger of one consolidated government.

VII. The union of Christians under any one consolidated ecclesiastical government, must be highly dangerous, if not fatal, to the cause of true piety.

Think of one great organization, ramifying into every country, involving itself with the political concerns of a hundred governments, forming one great and united community, with its own rules and usages, and conditions of admission,—and extending, even in the present state of Christianity, over two continents. What avenues for ambition—what a field for political intrigue would such a system present! How impossible that the Author of the sermon on the mount, could have contemplated such a system for extending among mankind, the meek and humble virtues of the gospel.

But we are saved the necessity of speculating on the probable consequences of such a plan, for we have had the experiment. The church in the middle ages, exhibits to us the scene; clothed with power and splendor,—in herself a continental empire,—she opened the highest and broadest field for human ambition, and was the great corrupter and destroyer of souls. Christianity then felt the effects, which such a system must inevitably bring. She shone in courts,—she rode in splendid processions,—she was a party to every political quarrel, and often led her own troops on to open war. She put her victims to the torture, buried true piety in dungeons, and burnt the innocent at the stake; while true devotedness to the real gospel of Christ, fled from her presence and her power, and hid itself in dens and caves of the earth, or escaped to the fastnesses of the mountains. These, too, were not accidental and extraordinary effects. They were the natural results, they might easily have been foreseen as the inevitable consequences of presenting such a field to human ambition and intrigue, as one ecclesiastical organization, extending over fifty or a hundred nations, and governed by one central power.

Sanction of God's Spirit.

VIII. God sanctions by the influences of his Holy Spirit, the existence and the operations of all those denominations of Christians, whatever may be their forms, whose faith and practice correspond with his Word.

This is evident from the success which has for the last century attended the efforts of the several great branches of the church, differing widely as they do, in their modes of organization and worship. This arrangement, one would think, must have some influence upon all those who believe that the special influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary to the success of any of our efforts to spread the gospel. By giving triumphant success in so many instances, to the preaching of the gospel, under Episcopalian, and Baptist, and Methodist, and Presbyterian, and Congregational forms, does not the Holy Spirit sanction the organizations under which these several branches of the church respectively act, at least, so far as to show, that there is nothing in either, which excludes them from being branches of the true church of Christ. If the success of efforts to save souls was a result which human instrumentality could itself secure, unaided and alone, we should not argue divine approbation from the mere fact, that God would not interfere to *prevent* success. But when it is admitted that success cannot be obtained without the special agency and co-operation of God, one would think its attainment would prove that the organization under which it is secured, could not be regarded by the Holy Spirit as very radically wrong. We cannot suppose that he would habitually appear to give his influences to systems of government and discipline opposed to the directions of Scripture, and whose prevalence could only tend to undermine and destroy the true church of God. The argument which Peter used, to prove that Gentiles, remaining such, might be admitted to the church of God, was, that "God bears them witness, giving them the

Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying *their* hearts by faith."* This argument seems to be as good and as applicable now, as then. Whom the Holy Spirit acknowledges, we ought not to disown.

Now, are not these considerations sufficient to show, at least, that the degree of importance now commonly attached to the distinctive peculiarities of the various denominations of Christians, is greater than the real state of the case will justify. We believe that they do, and that the admission of this truth by the churches generally, affords the only hope of the healing of our dissensions, which, perhaps, more than all other causes combined, hinder the progress of religion. The present state of things is certainly melancholy in the extreme. Each of the several great denominations, considering its own peculiarities essential to the character of a true church, the members of one are suspicious and jealous of the others. They must necessarily be so, for they must regard all others as schismatics. They may, indeed, allow that many of the members of other communions, as individuals, are good men, but, as organized into ecclesiastical bodies, they must deem them irregular and schismatical. Thus the members of each denomination excommunicate the others, and must do so as long as they maintain that their own peculiarities, though not necessary to personal salvation, are essential to the character of a true church. There is, accordingly, between these denominations, at the central points, in great cities, suspicion, jealousy, mistrust, manœuvring and counter manœuvring. And the evil influence spreads out to the remotest extremities, among the remote and thinly peopled districts of the country. The evil is, in fact, aggravated here, for all the Christian strength which can be gathered from the thin and scattered population, is only sufficient to sustain and carry forward the cause of

* Acts 15: 8, 9.

Christ, if united and at peace. But divided, and mutually jealous and hostile, their moral power is destroyed, and the community around them slumbers hopelessly in its sins.

And observe, that it is not the fact of division alone, which makes the case so desperate. It is the circumstance, that each branch considers the others irregular and spurious, so as to make it *a matter of conscience* to oppose them. It is the fact, that each one is so sure that its own peculiarities are essential to such an organization as will be pleasing to the Savior, that it must utterly condemn all others. This makes each one hopelessly rigid and tenacious of its position. It gives to party spirit, a perverted conscience for an ally, in the work of keeping up the walls which separate them; and of all alliances, this is the most obstinate and indissoluble. Even the outpouring of the Spirit upon a Christian community thus situated, does not remove the evil. For if men honestly believe that the communion of Christians to which they do not belong, is not organized on principles acceptable to Christ, they must oppose it,—secretly or openly, they must, if they are faithful, oppose it. And the more their hearts are stimulated to interest and fidelity in the Savior's cause, the more decided will be their hostility. They may suppress or conceal it, but it will still reign. It will keep its hold in every denomination, notwithstanding all pretensions to brotherly love, so long as the false idea is retained, that Jesus Christ meant to prescribe all the peculiarities which they respectively insist upon. While this idea remains, there cannot even be a plea for union offered, by any one who entertains it, which will amount to any thing more, in fact, than a call upon the members of other denominations, to come and join his own.

Such is the condition of the Christian church; while, in the meantime, the world lies almost undisturbed in its sins. Nature, however, in this, as in other diseases, prompts to some struggles for relief. These spontaneous

efforts are of two kinds,—first come contentions by argument, each party attempting to prove that its own forms are according to the true apostolic model. An argument from one quarter, arouses resistance and a counter argument from another; and all being equally in the wrong, in claiming exclusive validity for their own modes, the result of the contest depends upon the ability of the leaders, or the circumstances and prejudices of the minds they act upon. Things remain, however, in general, very much the same after the battle, as before; no extensive changes of opinion result, though each one clings, in consequence of the contest, more strongly to his own. At length, wearied out with the unprofitable warfare, the parties sink into a state of temporary repose.

This fruitless struggle being over, it is succeeded, perhaps, after a short pause, by one of a different kind. A fit of love and co-operation comes on. Union in measures and plans is proposed,—the parties each still thinking, that its own church is the only true one. They agree, however, to lay aside the discussion of the theory, and see if they cannot *act* together; and they form a benevolent society, or arrange a union prayer meeting, or a public lecture in common. But while each portion of the church considers its peculiarities essential, and all other organizations schismatic, what kind of a union can this be? It is inevitable that each party will be watchful and jealous. If they mean to take a high-minded and honorable course, they will be anxious and watchful, lest they should themselves do something to offend their allies; and, if on the other hand, they are narrow-minded, and envious, they will be on the watch, lest the others should do something unjust towards them. The very nature of the case shows, what all experience confirms, that such alliances between the denominations, while each one considers itself the only true church, will always be of the nature, not of a peace among friends,–but of a temporary and jealous truce between foes.

Accordingly, after this has been tried a little while, the lurking alienation creeps in again. The public lecture ends in a general heart burning among the branches of the church, instead of conviction among the impenitent;—the great benevolent society resolves itself into its sectarian elements; and the union prayer meeting, perhaps, breaks up in an open explosion.

Then, perhaps, comes on another controversy, in which the same old arguments, the same old texts, the same old quoting of precedents, and straining of words, and emphasising of particles, are brought forward against one another for the thousandth time, to prove what never can be proved. Thus the disease alternates. It is an intermittent. There is the cold stage and the hot stage;—the chilly fit of controversy, and the fever fit of forced and pretended love. In the meantime, the church moans in increasing weakness and suffering, and sin and Satan rejoice that an enemy which they could not have conquered in battle, is conquered for them by a pestilential and destructive disease.

What remedy now can there possibly be for these evils, but for Christians to cease to attach such importance to the differences of form which separate them? Is it not plain that it is this overrated importance which each denomination attaches to its own forms of organization, or to its own modes of performing the ceremonies of Christianity, that constitutes the repellancy between the branches,—is it not plain, too, that it is this refusal to acknowledge one another, and not simply the division, which makes the trouble? For if this spirit of hostility and exclusion were removed, the obstacle to coalescence would be removed; and though the present great denominations might remain, they would live together as sister branches, and individual Christians would consider it of comparatively little importance to which they might belong. The man whose mind is so constituted, that his devotion is aided by forms of

prayer, would not be jealous of his neighbor, because he preferred an extemporaneous petition; and a devoted servant of Jesus Christ, going to reside among an ignorant and vicious population, might perhaps hesitate whether a Methodist or a Congregational mode of government, would afford him greatest facilities for the successful prosecution of his Master's work. Thus each grand division of the church would wish well to the others, considering them all as branches of the true church of Christ. This they never can do now, for notwithstanding all attempts at union, and all pretended love, it is plain that one branch can never really wish well to another, while they consider it only an irregular association of good men; pious, but deceived; and hanging like an excrescence and a burden, about the true church of Christ.

Thus the giving up the essential importance of any particular modes of church government and worship, would produce a right state of feeling among the great denominations of Christians. The members of each would undoubtedly feel a special interest, as they ought to do, in the prosperity of their own branch of the church, but the bitterness of dissension would all disappear. The simple admission of the other denominations to the rank of sister branches of the true church, would change the whole aspect of their relations to one another. Where the population was large and dense, the taste and habits of different classes might be accommodated by arrangements suited to all; and where it was scattered and thin, the question would simply be, which of several equally regular branches of the church of Christ, shall we build up here; and it seems as if it would be impossible to keep true Christians from coming together, on such a question.

I am, however, far from being so sanguine, as to suppose that any very sudden change is to take place in the church, in respect to her internal dissensions. All that we can now hope to do, is, to find the direction in which the path

Summing up the case.

to *future* peace and happiness lies. This has been the object of this chapter.

To sum up the case, then, in conclusion, if we wish to do all we can towards giving the Christian church that efficiency and moral power, which she is designed to exercise, we must heal her divisions; and the first step towards this, is to banish from our own bosoms those suspicions and jealousies which so often separate the several branches of the great family. It is idle to hope that either of these branches will ever conquer and swallow up the rest. A struggle for this end, only thickens the walls, and strengthens the defences, and animates the hostility which separates the contending parties. It is time for the church to take a different ground, to take those views of the place and province of modes and forms, which is, most evidently, when we come to consider the subject, every where taken of them by the Holy Scriptures. We may cling to our own institutions as strongly as we please, and zealously endeavor to promote their prosperity. But when we reflect how much there is that is confessedly human in the structure, let us cease attempting to compel all others to give up their attachments for the sake of embracing ours.

We should show a great ignorance of human nature, and of the state of opinion in the various branches of the church, if we did not expect that the views advanced in this chapter would meet with opposition. The best of men, and the most devoted of Christians, who have long been accustomed to look forward to a consolidation of the church, and whose imaginations have painted in very glowing colors, the magnificence and beauty, but have concealed the fatal dangers of such a result, will shrink from the doctrines which we have attempted to maintain. Others will have lived too many years under the feeling of an exclusive attachment to their own forms, to think for a moment of admitting others to a theoretical equality, and

they will consider the prevalence of these views as fatal to the integrity of the Church. But the true church of Christ is a spiritual edifice,—ITS INTEGRITY IS A SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY; and that integrity, these views, if admitted, will establish, not destroy. They will make the church one, as *Christ was one with his disciples*, that is, in heart, and feeling, and desires,—and not merely in the frail bonds of official connection. We are convinced that the prevalence of these views affords the only hope of the pacification of the Christian Church; and it is this conviction of their vital importance as a means of enabling the Church to accomplish the full work of doing good, which God has assigned her, that has compelled us to introduce the discussion here.

We believe too, that the Church is already beginning extensively to receive these views, and the effect which we expect from this chapter, upon a vast majority of its readers, is, not to teach any thing new, but to reduce to form, and to establish views which they have long been insensibly imbibing. Let us extend them, and the pacification of the Church is accomplished for ever. They can be extended without disturbing the plans or the progress of any branch of the church of Christ. They will go from heart to heart, from closet to closet, and from prayer meeting to prayer meeting, and it will not be long before their fruits will be seen in the establishment of a friendly intercourse between all the branches of the great family of the Savior.—Then shall Episcopacy, venerable with age, and strong in the moral power of the hallowed associations which cluster around her;—and Congregationalism, active and vigorous in its simplicity, finding its ready way to the new and ever changing scenes of human life;—and Methodism, warm with emotion, penetrating into the mightiest masses of society, and changing the excitements of sin, into the warm, happy emotions of piety;—and Presbyterianism, with its steady and efficient government, its faithful standards,

and its devoted ministry;—these and all other branches of the great army of God, shall all move forward, side by side, against the one great enemy of their common Master. The world will then no longer point to our contentions, and quiet themselves in sin, but they will see, though our forms and usages may differ, that still, in heart and purpose, WE ARE ONE.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SICK.

"Sick, and ye visited me."

AN inspection of our table of contents, would not lead the reader to suppose that any very logical plan was pursued in the arrangement of the topics discussed in this work. It is, in fact, to be considered as a connected train of thought, rather than a systematic arrangement of several independent subjects of discussion. Accordingly, after two or three preliminary chapters, we took up the first and most obvious source of suffering which obtrudes itself upon our notice, in this valley of tears. It was poverty; and, as in the consideration of it, we saw that it admitted of no effectual remedy but the removal of its moral causes, we were led at once to the discussion of the great moral remedy for all moral evils,—the gospel of Jesus Christ; and the modes by which this remedy is to be most effectually applied. Having in the three last chapters considered this subject in its three most important aspects, we now return to the other great branch of physical evil.

Sickness; the twin sister and companion of want, and the sharer with her of the empire of human suffering. Like poverty, she is the daughter of sin, but is farther separated from her mother. Sin moves on, and sickness

lingers often behind, so that you may deal with her separately. Want, on the other hand, clings closely to her parent; they make common cause, and stand or fall together.

But to drop the metaphor,—although, as the bible teaches us, all sickness and pain are to be considered as the consequence of sin, yet they sometimes come from it so indirectly, and are separated from it so far by lapse of time, and are sometimes in so slight a degree connected with personal transgression, that we may apply our remedies directly to it, with comparatively little danger. In fact, there are several considerations, making our duty to the sick a very important part of the field of benevolent action.

1. We can very easily afford a great deal of relief and even of happiness to the sick; and that safely. If it is only temporary relief and happiness, it is an object worth securing, provided that it can be secured without danger. When we relieve the distresses of poverty by our friendly interposition, we are always solicitous, lest we may, in the end, make more unhappiness than we remove. The distress may be feigned, or may be in some way connected with deception, and our aid, in such a case, will only encourage and embolden fraud. Or a man may have neglected to make provision for coming wants, when he might have provided for them, and then, when he begins to feel their pressure, we may cut off the influence of a salutary lesson for the future, by the relief which we cannot find it in our hearts to deny. It sometimes seems almost cruel, to admit such suspicions, but it is only the extreme of inexperience or of folly, that can be blind to them.

In cases of sickness, however, they do not apply. All the good that we can do in the chamber of actual disease or suffering, is, with exceptions very few and rare, a work, at least, of safety.

And then, besides the safety of it, doing good in a sick

room, is a very effectual way of doing good. We work there to great advantage. A very little effort gives a great deal of relief, or a great deal of pleasure. Perhaps it is owing to the feelings of helplessness and dependence, which sickness brings, or perhaps to the effect of disease in awakening the susceptibilities of the mind, and rendering the sufferer more sensitive to kindness, as we know he is to sounds, and light, and pain. The sternest man will be softened, if you approach him with relief, or even with sympathy, when he is in sickness or pain.

Thus, if there are within the reach of your walks, a number of cases of sickness among the poor, and unfortunate, and neglected, there is no way in which you can spend a few hours each week, in doing more immediate and effectual good, than in seeking out the cases, and carrying to them your relief, or at least, your sympathy. There is, for example, in one lowly home, a poor man laid upon his hard, uncomfortable bed, by an accidental injury received in his work,—and the want, which his exertions only keep at bay, begins to take advantage of his helplessness, and to press his iron grasp upon the mother and children. Now you may visit him,—your words of sympathy and encouragement may save them all from despair. Your aid may find a little employment for the wife, or for a child, or a little medical advice for the patient, so as to hasten his release; and thus with a strict economy of your means of doing good, you may, by a small expenditure of time, and money, and care, give at once, great immediate relief, and save a whole family from much future suffering. And while you are doing it, the light of Christian example and character, which you will cause to shine into that dark home, may allure some of its inmates, in the end, to the banner under which you are serving.

Then again, here is another case. An incurable disease of a limb, is wasting away a little patient, and carrying him slowly and surely to the grave. Without pain, and with

very little general disease, he is confined by the apparatus of the surgeon in one position, which there is only the faintest possible hope that he will ever leave, till he is released from it to be laid in the last position of mortality. Till then, however, his arms and eyes are at liberty, and his soul is free; and contented, cheerful and happy, he welcomes you day after day with a smile, as you come to admire the little windmills, and boxes, that he makes with his penknife and glue,—or to give him new drawings to copy,—or a new book to read,—or to sit at his bed-side, with your hand upon his brow, wishing that all the suffering and the wretched could be as happy as he;—or to kneel by his bed-side, and pray simply for a continuance of the goodness and mercy with which God surrounds his little prisoner. His narrow room seems to be the connecting anti chamber of earth and heaven, and viewing both worlds from it, you can hardly desire that God should restore its inmate to the one he has left. His soul seems to float in the presence and communion of the Savior, as the swimmer in the warm summer sea.

Again, there is age, decrepit old age,—sitting helplessly by the fireside, in his ancient chair. His generation has gone off and left him, and he is alone. He feels like a stranger among the beings that have sprung up all around him, as it were in a day, and his thoughts and his memory run back spontaneously to times, and men, and events that now are gone; and which, though they are every thing to him, are nothing now to any body beside. It is painful to him to find that the knowledge and recollections to which alone his mind runs back with interest and pleasure, are insignificant and worthless to all around him. Now you may look in upon him a few minutes, as he sits in his armed chair in a winter evening, or stop to talk with him a moment under the trees, before his door, at sunset, in June; and by your tone of kindness and interest, and the air of respectful consideration always due to age, you revive the

heart of the aged pilgrim to sensations of happiness, which beam over his soul brightly, while you are with him, and linger there long after you are gone. The enjoyment is but little, I admit,—but then the expense is but *very* little, by which it is secured.

Then, besides all these sources of sickness and suffering, there is often near us, and sometimes at our very firesides, a visiter, whom we scarcely know whether to call an enemy or a friend. New England, if not her native land, is at least her loved and chosen home. She thrives in the refreshing coolness of our northern clime. The air of the sea breeze, of the cool autumnal evening, and of the wintry storm, constitute her very vital breath. Her form is slender and delicate,—a little too delicate and feeble for gracefulness; and her cheek, though it blooms, does not bloom exactly with beauty: but then her eye is bright, and her forehead is of marble. Her name is Consumption.

She loves New England, and lingers unobserved among us in a thousand scenes. She is always busy here, selecting her victims among the sensitive and the fair, and commencing secretly that mysterious process of entanglement, by which they are to become, at last, her hopeless prey She loves the slow moon-light walk, the winter sleigh-ride, and the return in the chilly coach at midnight, from the crowded city assembly. She helps make up the party in the summer evening sail,—uninvited, unwelcome, and unobserved,—but still there, taking her choice from all the lovely forms before her. She knows too well how to choose. She can appreciate intelligence, beauty, sensibility, and even moral worth, and in the collected assembly of her victims, you would find some of the brightest and loveliest specimens of humanity.

Now, perhaps, you may find some one of these victims in the circle of your walks, and you may easily do a great deal to relieve weariness, and restlessness, and pain, during the long months of decline, and to soothe the sufferings of the last hours.

The family and friends of the sick.

The good, which the Christian visiter may do in the sick chamber, is not confined to the suffering patient. The family and friends are comforted, and sustained, and strengthened by the influence of your presence. No one who has not experienced it, can tell how valuable is the spontaneous and heartfelt sympathy of a friend, to a family suffering, in one of its members, the invasion of alarming or fatal disease. The heart of the wife sinking within her, in anxiety and terror at her husband's sufferings or delirium, is refreshed and strengthened as by a cordial, when a kind neighbor comes in to share her watch and her anxious care. And so the hearts of the parents, distressed and filled with anguish, at witnessing the last struggles of an infant child, are cheered, and sustained, and comforted, by the presence and the silent sympathy of the friend, who watches with them till midnight brings the last breath, and the last pulsation, and gives the little sufferer repose. There is, in fact, no end to the variety of modes by which kindness to the sick is effectual in relieving pain and promoting happiness. Sickness seems to soften the heart and awaken all its susceptibilities of gratitude and happiness. Kindness and sympathy are never so longed for, and so welcome as here, and never touch the heart more effectually, or awaken stronger feelings of gratitude and affection. It *may be* all merely temporary pleasure, which is thus communicated; but it is real and great, if it is temporary, and it can be all accomplished with little effort and little danger.

2. By kind attention to the sick, we may gain an influence in favor of piety, over the sick themselves, and over the families to which they belong. Piety is, in respect to mankind, love; and in no way, perhaps, can its true character be more fairly shown, than in the sick room. The colors, too, in which it appears there, are all alluring. In ordinary intercourse with mankind, the pressure of business, or the forms and usages of social life, repress, in a

great degree, those moral manifestations which shine out spontaneously in the sick room, and exhibit the character of submission to God, and kind interest in man, which the Savior commands us to let shine as a light in this dark world of sin.

Thus, in many, many instances, a cold, heartless, unbelieving, and perhaps vicious father, has been led to see the reality of religion, by his intercourse with the Christian friend, who has come to visit his sick child. In fact, sickness seems often sent, as it were, to open a door of admission to an ungodly family, by which the gospel may enter in. The family are first grateful for the kindness,—then they see the moral beauty of the character which exhibits it. The religious conversation which is offered in a kind, conciliating, and unassuming tone, in the sick chamber, or around the fireside of an adjoining room, is listened to with a respectful attention, though, perhaps, under no other circumstances could it have found an access to those ears. These first steps may not be very important ones, but it is something to bring the soul, which is utterly hostile to God, to a parley. The reading of proper religious books,—an occasional, and at length a regular attendance at the house of God, are perhaps the succeeding steps; and when a family is brought thus far, by the gentle and unassuming moral influence which may, without great difficulty, be exerted over them, it is safe to expect that the change will go farther. It is into such a family that the Holy Spirit loves to enter and complete the work which, without his aid, could not even have been begun. Reader,—is there not within your reach a family of unhappy wanderers from God, into which sickness has gone and opened a door of easy and pleasant access to you? Inquire and ascertain; and if there is, find your way there without delay, and by kind, unceasing and delicate attentions, fasten a silken cord of gratitude and affection to their hearts, by which you may draw the inmates to the Savior and to happiness.

Or, if the family, to which you show Christian kindness in sickness, is cultivated and refined, though worldly, the light of Christian character is brought to their minds more distinctly than before, and it comes in a more alluring form. They are your neighbors or acquaintances, but as you have been mutually conscious of the great difference between you and them, in respect to your religious feelings and hopes, each party has imagined feelings of coldness and reserve to exist in the other; nothing is more common than this state of feeling, between religious and irreligious acquaintances or friends. Now the sickness, which gives you the opportunity of showing kindness, breaks down the barrier, and changes the look and tone of cold reserve, which each party imagined that he was adopting in self-defence, to the open, and cordial, and honest expressions of good will.

It is, however, somewhat dangerous to point out these indirect results which come from kindness to the sick, lest they should lead our deceiving and deceitful hearts to an affectation of benevolence, or of solemnity, for the purpose of securing them. But there is no disguise so slim, at least, there is none more easily seen through, by the intelligent observer, than affectation of piety;—the solemn look, assumed to suit the supposed proprieties of an occasion,—the affected tone, a clumsy counterfeit of the inflections of real feeling,—the forced conversation, constrained, unnatural, indirect,—and the prayer, in which the speaker pretends to be addressing the Supreme, when you perceive, at once, from the rhetorical structure of his sentences, and the clumsy insinuations and allusions, that the bystanders only are in his mind. If this is the kind of Christian light, which these paragraphs tend to kindle in the sick rooms, which the readers may visit, they had better never have been written. No, let us be honest, open, direct in all we say or do. If we feel no emotion, let us never feign any; never. Let us see that our hearts are right towards

God and man, and then let our words and looks freely follow the impulses they receive from within. It is only honest, frank, open-hearted, unaffected piety which can gain any great or permanent ascendency, in such a world as ours.

3. By kindness to the sick, we have some hope of promoting the spiritual good of the patient,—though we confess that this hope must be faint and feeble. The good that is done is mainly that specified under the preceding heads; either the present relief and comfort, amounting sometimes to positive enjoyment, which results directly from the effort, or the influence in favor of the cause of piety, resulting from the exhibition of its true character, in its own appropriate sphere. These are often overlooked, and the chief hopes of the christian visiter are directed to the spiritual benefit of the patient himself, which we have melancholy evidence is very seldom in any great degree attained. This evidence, however, though it is melancholy, we ought to see. It is best for us to understand what hopes there are of preparation for death on a sick bed, both for our own guidance in respect to others, and also that we may know what to calculate upon, ourselves, in respect to our own last hours.

"But why," the reader will ask, who is accustomed to think that sickness brings with it peculiar opportunities for repentance, "why is it that we may not hope to promote the spiritual good of the sick? They are then withdrawn from the world. The power of its temptations is destroyed,—eternity, if not actually near, is at least seen more distinctly, and more fully realized. There are many long hours favorable to reflection, and every thing seems to invite to repentance for sin, and reconciliation with God."

This is all true, and if nothing but an invitation to the favor of God, and urgent, alarming necessity for reconciliation with him were wanting, every sick man conscious of sickness, would be sure to be saved. But unhappily it is not all There is a heart to be changed. A heart which

shrinks from God, dislikes communion with him, and loves sin, is to be so entirely altered in its very fundamental desires, as to seek God eagerly and spontaneously, as its refuge, its home, its happiness,—to delight in his presence and communion, and to hate and shrink from sin. Now the natural effect of sickness is simply to awaken uneasiness or anxiety, and we can see no special tendency in uneasiness or anxiety to produce such a change, in the very desires and affections of the soul, as this.

But let us look at the facts a little more in detail. There are several distinct conditions in which the dangerously sick may be found, and most of them are such as to preclude the possibility of deriving any spiritual benefit, from the supposed facilities afforded by the situation. We will consider some of these.

(1.) A large class never know their danger, or at least have no time to think of it, until they are too far gone to be sensible of it. Thus for all purposes of reflection, they know nothing of their sickness, till they are convalescent, or until they awake in eternity. For example, a man in the midst of his business, is suddenly attacked by severe acute disease. The shooting pains, the chills, the fever alarm him, and anticipating a fit of sickness, he is busy to the last moment in making arrangements and giving directions, and when he can do no more, there follows the bustle of preparation in his room,—the visit of the physician, the bath, or the friction, or the venesection. An hour or two spent thus is succeeded by a disturbed slumber, from which he awakes in delirium. Perhaps a fortnight after, God raises for a single hour, the mysterious pressure, under which the soul had been imprisoned, and the unhappy man has barely time to see the grave open at his feet, before clouds and darkness shut in again over his soul, and he sinks for ever.

Precisely this would be, indeed, a case of uncommonly sudden and severe disease, but many such occur, and very

many occur which are precisely like it in the essential point, that is, that the patient never knows his danger, nor reflects seriously upon his sickness, till it is too late for him to understand it at all. These cases are rendered more numerous by the almost universal tendency, on the part of family and friends, to present to the patient the brightest side of his case. This arises not always from a deliberate intention to deceive,—in fact, the parent, or the friend, standing by the bedside, cherishes himself the hope which he wishes to present to the patient; and he unconsciously overrates the grounds of it, in his desire to give the sick one the advantage of its exhilarating and sustaining power. At other times, the truth, too plain to the physician and the friends, is suppressed, and concealed from the deceived sufferer; and the grave grasps him, while the words are actually on the lips of his attendants, that assure him that he shall soon be well. Oh, how often have parents thus deceived their dying children. How can they do it? How can they bear to allow one, who looks up to them with entire confidence and affection, to go from them suddenly into eternity, and have there to reflect, that the last words he heard his father and his mother speak to him, were falsehood and deception?

Still, nothing is more common, and from these and other similar cases, it comes that a very large number of human beings finish their pilgrimage without a warning. Of course, the sick-bed affords no facilities for a preparation for death, to them.

(2.) Then there is another large class, whose disease or state of mind is such, that they cannot safely be addressed on the subject. That is, the probability that any good will be done, by religious conversation with them, is smaller, than that if left to mental quiet, they may recover, and be brought to repentance by future opportunities for enjoying the means of grace. There are many cases where the most faithful christian physician would require perfect

quiet and repose; and we are not obstinately to insist on pressing the guilt and danger of the sinner upon his attention, where the probable result would be only to aggravate disease, and hasten death, and thus secure, at once, the ruin, from which we were endeavoring to save him. The cases, however, where a kind and judicious religious influence, over one in dangerous disease, would really be unsafe, are not very common: but those where the patient or the friends think it would be unsafe, so as to feel obliged to preclude it, are numberless. They form a second large class, which cannot be expected to be much benefited by the opportunities which sickness affords them.

(3.) Then there are a great number, who sink, in sickness, into a state of indifference and stupor, from which nothing can arouse them. Whether this is one of the innumerable forms of the infatuation of sin, or some peculiar mental torpidity, resulting from disease, the effect is certain, and the instances innumerable. Sometimes the patient shrinks from, and shuns the conversation that would awaken him,—and sometimes he welcomes it, and listens to it, as if he wished that it might produce its proper effect,—and then he complains with stupid despair, that he can see his guilt and danger, but cannot feel them.

Hardness of heart does not arise from such causes as that approaching death will certainly remove it. It is a moral insensibility which has its existence within itself, and is slightly affected by mere external causes. If the habits of life have formed and fixed it, it will sometimes maintain its hold, even to the last hour.

(4.) Then, besides, of those who are led to feel some alarm, a very large proportion never go farther than alarm. They are agitated, and anxious, and unhappy; but agitation is not piety,—and anxiety about death, is not preparation for it. In fact, the feeling of restless suffering is, probably, in many cases, only a manifestation of actual hostility to God. The soul finds itself brought up, as it

were, to meet its Maker. It sees that it is approaching the close of its connection with the world, and that the course of time is drawing it directly on towards God. It looks this way and that way for escape, but finds none; and its restless, anxious uneasiness, is only its shrinking, with instinctive dislike, from the great Being to whom it ought to fly eagerly, as to its refuge and home. If this is its condition then, the more restless alarms, the more hostility; and it goes at last into the presence of its Maker, like the terrified child into the arms of the stranger whom it dislikes and dreads.

These four classes constitute, undoubtedly, a very large portion of the sick,—but we must thin the number that is left, a little more; for

(5.) There are the deceived. One would think, that on a sick and dying-bed, the heart would abandon its subterfuges and deception, and be honest with itself at last, before it goes into eternity. Instead of this, self deception maintains its hold here, as in its last intrenchment.

In fact, a little reflection would convince us at once, that the circumstances of a sick-bed are such as to create very great danger of self deception. That loss of interest in the world, which is the result of confinement, weakness and pain,—how easily may it be mistaken for a heartfelt and voluntary renunciation of it. Death, too, may seem near, —bringing with it all its terrors, and under their threatening aspect the spirit sinks. Now how easy it is for the soul to welcome the idea of reconciliation with God, simply as a relief from anxiety and suffering, and then to imagine that to be the chosen object of its love, to which in fact it only flies as a refuge from fear. Then again, sickness, though it sometimes inflames and irritates the spirit, perhaps oftener softens and soothes it, by some mysterious physical influences upon the nervous system. The selfish, turbulent and ungovernable child often lies subdued and quieted under its hand, and gladdens his

mother's heart by his unlooked for manifestations of submission and gratitude;—the nurse welcomes returning irritability as a sign of returning health. This morbid loveliness of spirit, like the unnatural brightness of the eye, or hectic bloom upon the cheek, is often the companion of disease, and not unfrequently the immediate precursor of death. It calms all the passions of the soul, it lulls the sensorium into rest, and disarms temptation of its power, by taking away the very fuel it feeds upon. It gives the kindest and gentlest intonations to the voice, and spreads over the countenance an expression of benevolence and submission. It often mingles with piety, and clothes it in its last hours, with a most fascinating loveliness;—but alas, it also often takes its place,—its most successful and yet most superficial counterfeit. It deceives death,—meeting him with a smile; but convalescence is its certain detection and exposure. For when health is returning, its colors soon fade, and its moral loveliness turns to irritability, fretfulness, and selfish, suspicious jealousy. How far the movements of a soul, thus so directly modified, either favorably, or unfavorably, by the nervous influences of disease, are to be considered as affected in respect to moral character and accountability, is a question too deep for us to enter into here. One thing, however, is certain, that if we make allowances on this account, as by common consent we do, for what is wrong, we must also make some deductions of credit for what is right.

But we ought to repeat that the state of mind and heart which we have been describing, though sometimes the counterfeit of piety, is often its attendant, so that the graces of character, which are exhibited in the sick-chamber, where there is evidence of a stable foundation on which they rest, are not to be considered as unsubstantial and transitory. Every visiter among the sick, will call to mind, cases where the solid characteristics of real piety shone with a heavenly beauty and splendor, imparted to them by these mysterious influences of lingering disease.

Little Nathan Dickerman.

While saying this, there rises to my mind the recollection of one sick-room which exhibited, before all others that I have seen, the most striking example of it. It was that of the child Nathan Dickerman,* whose chamber during the last months of his life, beamed with an expression of loveliness and peace, which no pen can describe.

Those grim tyrants, disease and death, seemed in his case, to relax from their sternness and cruelty, that they might vary their work of oppression, as other tyrants have done, by showing for once what they do, in lavishing kindness and decorations upon a favorite. 'T is true, that they insisted that he should be theirs, and so they maintained with inflexible determination, their own destructive hold upon the organs of life; though he was their favorite, he must wear their chain. For the rest, all was kindness They brightened his intellect, they expanded, almost beyond maturity, his embryo powers, they smoothed the features of his countenance into an almost heavenly expression, and breathed into his soul an atmosphere of indescribable sweetness and peace, and enjoyment. These stern and uncompromising, and usually pitiless masters, appeared disposed, in his case, to lay aside their terrors. For once they seemed to love their victim;—they smiled upon him where he lay.

The enchanting expression, however, which beamed from the whole scene which his little room exhibited, was indebted for its chief lineaments to a most sincere and unaffected piety. There was abundant evidence of it, of the most solid kind. But piety, in such a case as this, substantial and sure, is softened and beautified by the mellowing influence of disease. It is the corporeal and the animal only, which fails under its hand; all that is pure, and lovely, and beautiful in the spirit, in the intellect, in the soul, rises the more free and the more resplendent for being released from its ordinary burdens.

* Memoir of Nathan W. Dickerman.

But to return; this mysterious effect produced by disease, in subduing and softening all the asperities of the character, which sometimes *accompanies* piety, perhaps oftener merely assumes the guise of it. It helps to make up the immense variety of modes by which the soul deceives, and is itself deceived.

When, now, we come to consider all these numerous cases in which no spiritual benefit is derived from the opportunities afforded by a sick-bed,—those who are cut off too suddenly to know their situation, those who are rendered inaccessible by the nature and violence of their disease, those who are indifferent and stupid, those who are only alarmed, and those who are deceived,—we shall have but few remaining who can be considered as making any effectual preparation for death, when sickness comes with its warnings. The good therefore, which we are to expect to effect by our visits to the sick and the suffering, is chiefly in other ways than in the preparation of the individual sufferer for his approaching account. There is however, some hope, even of this. It is *one* of the objects at which we have to aim.

Having thus brought to the view of the reader the nature of the good which he must expect to do, we proceed in the remainder of this chapter, to enumerate some of the more plain and important directions necessary to enable him most successfully to do it.

1. In your arrangements for visiting and relieving cases of sickness among the poor, be always on your guard against imposture. Go forward freely and openly to the relief of suffering, wherever you find it, but be constantly awake to the probability that you may in any case be deceived. Nothing surpasses the readiness with which the vicious poor resort to a feigning of sickness and suffering in order to procure undeserved charity, unless it be the adroitness with which they carry their wicked schemes into effect. Sometimes the disease is entirely a fabrication,

and sometimes, a little reality is made the basis of long continued indications of suffering. In fact, we often, by our own indiscreet and profuse benefactions to a sick family, actually produce such a state of things that recovery would be a calamity. We place them under a strong temptation to dissemble, and the lesson once learned, is not soon forgotten.

These remarks may seem rather severe and even cruel. They are severe, I admit, and I assure my readers that I exceedingly regret the necessity of making them. It is far easier for us, and pleasanter at first, to give the reins to sentiment, and follow on, wherever she leads the way. But cool, calculating, intelligent principle is a better leader in the end. We need warm feeling as a companion in the voyage, but the understanding does better at the helm What I have stated above, and similar views exhibited in the chapter on the Poor, are unquestionably the truth, and whoever is not willing to know the truth, even where it is unpleasant, will never be very efficient or persevering in doing good. His benevolence rests on delusion,—a very unsubstantial basis. However, we ought not to be always suspicious,—and above all, we ought never, without good cause, to indicate suspicions. We want the art,—and it is one of the last, and most difficult of the intellectual arts to be acquired,—of suspending judgment. We must be able to look at a case of alleged sickness and suffering, and to take effectual, though cautious measures for its relief, while all the time we keep it a question whether it is real or not. We do not suppose it to be pretended,—nor do we believe it to be real. We have no evidence on one side or the other, and we act very cautiously and prudently, though kindly, until we have valid ground for a decision.

2. Be still and delicate and gentle in all your intercourse with the sick. In fact, the same principle in this respect applies to moral and physical treatment. That attendant will do most towards promoting recovery, who can carry

the required measures into the most regular and complete effect, and yet in the easiest and gentlest manner,—the one who can open and shut the door most quietly, and manage so as to have occasion most seldom to do it at all; the one who can replenish the fire so as least to attract the patient's attention, and give the fewest directions in his hearing, and have the medicine or the drink at his lips at the proper time, with the least bustle of preparation; the one who walks softly, whose tones are gentle, whose touch is delicate, and whose countenance exhibits an expression of cheerful repose. Such an one is most successful in soothing and quieting the sensitive susceptibilities of acute disease, and facilitating the sanative influences which medical skill, conjoined with the spontaneous efforts of nature, have diffused through the frame.

Now it is not the sensorium merely that must be defended against the rude and rough approaches which it could safely sustain in health. The organs of the mind are as sensitive as the optic or the auditory nerves. This is shown by the fact that all the stillness and gentleness of the attendant must be easy and natural, or it is unavailing. Evident and laborious effort to walk on tiptoe, or to renew the fuel in the grate in silence, or to suppress the directions which it is plain are given, will worry the mind, even more perhaps than the sounds they avoid would disturb the ear. Now we may learn from these unquestionable facts, a lesson in regard to the whole manner in which we are to approach the sick, with the moral influences which we attempt to bring before them. We must remember that even the moral powers upon which we propose to act are in a state of morbid sensitiveness; at least that the corporeal and mental faculties through which we propose to reach them are so. Even the moral powers themselves may be morbidly sensitive, while yet they may be in a state, as we have before maintained, altogether unfavorable to receiving any permanently salutary impression. We must therefore

be most gentle, and delicate, and tender, both in respect to the aspects in which we bring religious truth before the patient, and in the tone and manner in which we present it. And we must be thus delicate and gentle, without the parade of an effort to be so.

3. Be frank and open with the sick. Gentleness and delicacy must never be allowed to degenerate into indirectness and artifice. Be open and frank, and honest in all you do. This is the only safe principle, in fact, in all modes of religious influence. If you want to pursue a course which shall do the least good, and give the greatest offence, your wisest way is to adopt a system of manœuvring and hints and inuendoes. When we attempt to convey secret reproof or instruction, by the language of indirectness or insinuation, in order to save offence, we lose our labor, if we are not understood, and we give offence in the most awkward and unpleasant manner possible, if we are.

For example, a man has lived an irregular life, sheltered by his belief that there is to be no future judgment. He is taken sick; he feels uneasy, and consents that his wife should send for you. Now we will suppose that you think it best to gain access to him by stratagem. A very common plan would be something like this.

You find in your little pocket bible some strong and decided passage which asserts a future retribution, and put a mark in at the place. Perhaps you adroitly adjust the mark so that it protrudes but a little from the lower edges of the leaves, so as to be observable only by your own eye. Thus provided, you make your appearance at his bedside, and after a little preliminary conversation, you propose to read to him a few verses from the bible, and open, as if by accident, to the chapter you have privately selected with reference to his own case. You make a few remarks on other verses of it, but read very distinctly the passage which you are most desirous that he should hear. Then

you kneel to offer prayer, and, perhaps, to carry out your stratagem, you use expressions which are aimed all the time against his errors, while you profess to be offering supplications to God. After some farther conversation, in which you cautiously abstain from all allusion to what has been, during the whole time, uppermost in your mind, you leave your patient, thinking that you have managed the delicate case very adroitly.

But what now has probably been the effect on the mind of your patient. Probably his thoughts have been occupied all the time with the question, whether your selection of that chapter was accidental or designed, and his speculations upon this have diverted his mind from every serious reflection:—if indeed he has not seen entirely through your thin disguise, and is not secretly hurt and displeased at your pursuing a policy of artifice and reserve, which chills and discourages, and distresses him. The truth is, this spiritual chicanery does not do. Management, artifice, manœuvre is always dangerous, whether between Christian and sinner, teacher and pupil, parent and child, or friend and friend. The chance that any person will understand a hint or a covert allusion so far as to take its force, and yet stop short of perceiving that it was intended, is very small. So that such modes of accomplishing the object, greatly diminish the hope of doing good, and vastly increase the probability of doing injury.

On the other hand, frank and open-hearted honesty and plain dealing, scarcely ever give offence, provided that they are under the control of real benevolence, and are not dictatorial and assuming. In the case of the sick man last described, how much more easily and pleasantly, both to yourself and to him, would you gain access to his heart, by saying at once, with a tone of frank and cheerful kindness, "I have understood, sir, that you have not been accustomed to believe in a state of future retribution;" and then leading the conversation directly and openly to the

Frankness. Privileged persons. Quiet for the sick.

point which both you and he have most prominently in view. You thus open at once, a plain and honest understanding with him. He feels that he is treated frankly and openly, and if you take the friendly, unassuming attitude before him, which man ought always to take with his fellow man, you will find, that whether you succeed or fail in bringing him to receive the truth, you will not fail in securing his respect and attachment.

In fact, plain, honest, open-hearted men are noted for giving no offence,—even to a proverb. They are called privileged persons; so much are they allowed to say, without awakening resentment. But this, their freedom, is not by any means, their own personal prerogative; it is the universal privilege of frankness, honesty, and unaffected good will,—all the world over.

4. While we are plain and direct in dealing with the sick, we must remember their weakness, and not exhaust them by such a course as shall force them to *active effort* in our intercourse with them. So far as intercourse with us is concerned, the more passive we leave them, the better. Every exertion, mental or bodily, fatigues them. Forming a mental conclusion on the most simple point, is often a burden. If the question is only whether you shall bring them one beverage or another, to moisten their parched lips, both being upon the table, they would rather that you would decide than put the question to them.

The act of considering, fatigues,—the simplest question rouses them from the state of repose; and framing an answer to any inquiry, requires an effort which it is better to save them. Thus even the visit of a friend, who barely comes to the bed-side, and speaks scarcely a word, produces restlessness which is slow to subside again. The simple presence of the stranger disturbs, and imposes a feeling of restraint and a necessity of attention;—a sort of feeling that something ought to be said, while yet the patient has nothing to say. Even to *look* at a sick child, makes him restless in his cradle.

Real object to be accomplished.

And yet, that same sick child would perhaps enjoy your visit, if you pay no attention to him, but sit and talk a short time with his mother. In that case, his mind follows on easily and gently in the train of your narrative or dialogue, without being aroused to the necessity of actively participating in it. The mind loves, in such a case, to be passive and still. It often enjoys a gentle action exerted *upon* it, while any thing that arouses it to any action in return, destroys its rest, and makes it suffer uneasiness and fatigue.

Now there are many cases where these facts must be kept fully in view, in efforts to promote the spiritual benefit of the sick, and where we must avoid arousing them to the necessity of active intellectual effort. The direct question, the train of argument, interlocutory conversation which keeps the mind of the patient intent to follow you and to frame his replies,—all these fatigue and exhaust, if the bodily weakness is extreme. And they are not necessary, as will be seen at once, if we consider what the nature of the change is, which we wish to effect. Whatever may be the character of the patient, it is a moral change, not an intellectual one, which we desire to produce. We do not wish to cultivate his intellect, to carry him forward in theology, or to try his strength in an argument. We wish simply to produce a change of action in the moral movements of his soul. We wish that those affections which now vibrate in unison with the world and sin, should change their character into a unison with holiness and love. It is indeed evident that the truth is the only means of promoting this change; or rather, that a degree of truth must be admitted by the mind, or there can be no hope. But then, in a vast majority of cases, this truth is known and admitted beforehand. In fact, far less is necessary to make the way of penitence and faith plain and open before the feet of the sinner, than is generally supposed.

Besides, it is not so much the truth, in the shape of pro-

Truth to be presented quietly.

positions which are to be maintained by argument, and received as theological theorems forced upon the mind by the severity of the logic which sustains them, which is the means of conversion. It is truth, as a view, a moral picture, formed by the spiritual conception, and contemplated in all its beauty and loveliness; it is this that touches the heart, and is the means of awakening new spiritual life in the soul. It is such truth as is *presented* to the mind, not proved to it.

Instead, therefore, of a labored argument, or a formal exhortation to the sufferer, on the duty of submitting to God,—an address to which he listens with painful, wearisome effort,—and which only leaves him restless and uneasy when you finish it, because he has nothing to reply, you take from your pocket a little hymn book, and say to him, "I must not talk with you. I know you are too feeble to talk, but I will read to you a few verses of a hymn, and then bid you good-by."

You then read as follows:

"'My times are in thy hand,'
My God I wish them there;
My life, my friends, my soul I leave
Entirely to thy care.

"'My times are in thy hand,'
Whatever they may be,
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to thee.

"'My times are in thy hand,'
Why should I doubt or fear?
My Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.'"

Now I am well aware that a cold, hardened lover of the world, interested in religious conversation only because he is alarmed at the approach of death, cannot certainly be expected to yield himself at once, with filial submission

into the hands of his Maker, merely by hearing the language of submission used by another; even if the reading of it is prefaced by words of kindness and sympathy on the part of his visiter. The change from dislike, and fear, and shrinking, in respect to God, to entire self-devotion, confidence and love, is altogether too great, and also altogether too far beyond all mere human instrumentality, for us to depend upon this. Yet still, no person who has observed human nature with attention, can doubt that the state of mind produced by such circumstances as those here described, is most favorable for the promotion of this change. Such a presentation of truth, furnishes the occasion on which new spiritual life is awakened. The *idea* of filial submission, fairly and distinctly brought before the mind, takes a stronger hold upon the conscience, than the most conclusive *argument* for submission. The latter calls the intellect mainly into action; the former goes directly to the heart.

We must remember that it is not alarm or agitation, or the giving up of theological errors, or perceiving new theological truth, which can prepare the soul for death;—but a *change of heart*. This alarm or agitation, or this change of theological opinion, may often be, especially in cases of health, the antecedent step; and the labors of the preacher may often be directed to the production of them. But they are only means to an end, and there are some peculiar reasons why, in sickness, the attempt to produce them should be avoided. In sickness, the enemy is, as it were, disarmed. He lies defenceless and helpless in the hands of God, and our policy is to come to him in the gentlest manner possible, out of regard to his physical feebleness, and just lay before him the bread of life, in hopes that the Holy Spirit will dispose him to eat of it, and live.

I need scarcely say that the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, is the main truth to be thus presented to the mind

of the sick or dying sinner. The need of a Savior is felt then, though it may have been denied and disbelieved before. John Randolph, when he gazed upon the word Remorse, shown to him at his direction, upon his dying bed, and repeated it with such an emphasis of suffering, and then turned to an atoning Savior for a refuge from the terrifying spectre, acted as the representative of thousands. The soul, distressed, burdened, struggling in vain to escape its load by mere confession, finds a refuge in a Mediator, which it cannot elsewhere find. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"—comes home like cool water to the thirsty soul. There is no substitute for it. Nothing else will soothe and calm the troubled spirit under the anguish of bitter recollections of the past, and dark forebodings for the future.

But even this cup of comfort and peace must be presented properly, or the presentation of it will be in vain. At least, it is far more likely to be received, if brought forward in accordance with the directions already given. You may, for instance, here, as before, simply read a few verses of a hymn, in the patient's hearing, thus:

"Heart-broken, friendless, poor, cast down,
Where shall the chief of sinners fly,
Almighty Vengeance, from thy frown?
Eternal Justice, from thine eye?

"Lo, through the gloom of guilty fears,
My faith discerns a dawn of grace;
The Sun of Righteousness appears
In Jesus' reconciling face.

"My suffering, slain, and risen Lord,
In sore distress I turn to thee;
I claim acceptance in thy word;
Jesus, my Savior, ransom me.

'Prostrate before the mercy seat,
I dare not, if I would despair;
None ever perished at thy feet,
And I will lie for ever there.'

Or you may read a narrative, or you may address direct conversation on the subject, or read and comment upon a passage of Scripture; but in all that you do, keep constantly in mind the patient's weakness, and the state of his disease, and do not go beyond his powers. This you will easily avoid, if you leave him as much as possible in a passive state, so far as intercourse with you is concerned. Let him lie quiet and undisturbed, so that the whole physical and intellectual man may be as completely as possible in a state of repose, while you gain a gentle access directly to the *soul*, and hold up there those exhibitions of truth which may awaken the moral powers to new spiritual life.

6. Do not try to ascertain the effect of your instructions to the sick. Do what you can, but leave the result to be unfolded at a future day. The reasons for this direction, are two. First, you cannot ascertain if you try, and secondly, you will generally do injury by the attempt.

First, you cannot ascertain if you try. The indications of piety, and also of impenitence, upon a sick-bed, are both exceedingly delusive. So much depends upon character, temperament, constitution, habits of expression, &c. that the most dissimilar appearances may be exhibited in cases where the spiritual state is substantially the same. In one case, the heart is really changed, but the subject of the change dares not believe it, and still less dares he express any hope of it; and his darkness and despondency would be mistaken almost universally, for continued impenitence and insubmission. Another, deceived by the illusions which we have already explained, finds a false peace, which, the more baseless it is, the more confidently he expresses it; and Christians very rarely question the

sincerity of professions, unless they are compelled to do it by gross inconsistency of conduct.

These difficulties exist, it is true, in other cases besides those of sickness, and they should teach us to be less eager to ascertain the immediate results of our efforts, than we usually are; and less credulous in trusting to them. But they apply with tenfold force to sickness, whether it be in the sufferings of acute disease, or in the slow lingerings of decline. The world is shut out, and the ordinary test,—the only safe one,—the fruit, is here excluded.

Then, secondly, we do *injury* by endeavoring to ascertain. We harass and fatigue the patient by pressing him to give *us* an answer to the claims which we present to him. If we lay truth and duty before him, and, as it were, leave it there, his health will suffer far less, than if we follow it with a sort of inquisition into its effects. To bear an examination is very hard work, when the subject is strong and well,—it is exhausting and irritating, to the last degree, in sickness, especially when the patient would hardly know how to express his feelings, even if they were distinctly developed and mature, and he is, in fact, only beginning to experience new states of mind which he scarcely understands himself, and certainly cannot describe.

It is far better, both for ourselves, and for the soul which we wish to save, that we should not make much effort to remove the veil which hangs over his future condition. We shall go on with our work in a more humble manner, and in a better spirit, if we feel that the duty only is ours; and the result of it, God's; and the sinner who has postponed repentance till summoned to his sick chamber, will be most sure of being safe at last if he does not think himself safe too soon. Some degree of uncertainty in respect to the genuineness of a change which has been produced under such circumstances, will be the best for him, whether he is to live or die.

Faint hope of success.

7. Do not confidently expect much good effect. This, however, ought not to be said in an unqualified manner, for in all our efforts, a degree of expectation and hope is justly warranted, both by the word of God and by common observation,—and this degree we ought to entertain as a means of enabling us to work with ease and pleasure, and with a prospect of success. But in our intercourse with the sick, we must not so depend upon leading them to repentance at the late hour to which they have postponed their duty, as to be disappointed and discouraged if we see no decided evidence of a change. Preparation for death in sickness, is made far less frequently than is generally supposed. It is surprising that it is ever made at all. But the faintest hope that an immortal soul may be saved, justifies the most earnest efforts, and the most heartfelt prayer. This effort must by all means be made, but it would be well for mankind, if they could, by any means, be undeceived about the nature of the spiritual influences which will surround them in their dying hours. In each particular instance that occurs, our sympathy with surviving friends leads us to hope against hope, and to encourage expectations which do not indeed affect the dead, but which raise a false light to lure and destroy the living. We ought to do all in our power to make known the melancholy truth, — sad, but unquestionable, — that when the last hours of life come, it is generally too late to make preparation, if it has been delayed, and too late even to finish it, if it has only been begun. It is too late, not because repentance would not even then be availing, but because it is the tendency of that last sad occasion, if it disturbs the stupor of sin at all, not to bring penitence, but only agitation, anxiety and alarm.

8. The preceding heads have related chiefly to those whom the invasion of sickness, or the approach of death, has found unprepared. We are often, however, called to the bed-side of the dying Christian, whose life has exhibit-

ed evidence of his reconciliation with God. Our duty with these, is to go on with them as far as we may, into the dark valley, to cheer, and sustain, and help them. God has himself promised to be their stay and support, and the means he uses to accomplish this promise, are often to a great extent, the kindness and sympathy of a Christian friend. These cases are, in some important respects, different from the preceding. In those, the work of life has been neglected, and is crowded into the last melancholy hours: in these, that work is done already, and nothing remains but to go through the last sickness and suffering, to the home anticipated and provided for. In the other cases, therefore, though there was need of the greatest delicacy and quiet in the mode of calling the patient's attention to what was to be done, there was yet a great deal to do. In the latter, we have only to smooth the path of the sufferer, and speak to him in tones of sympathy and affection, and walk along by his side.

Whatever influence the degree of holiness which the Christian may have attained to during his life, may have upon his happiness and glory in eternity, we have very little evidence that any progress which he can make in a few days of severe sickness will materially affect it. Our wisest course, therefore, in such a case, is, to bring occasionally before the mind, as our interviews may give us opportunity, such presentations of divine truth, as may reawaken holy feeling, and cheer and sustain the heart. One of David's short and simple petitions, or a scriptural promise, or a verse or two of a hymn, not didactic, but expressive of feeling, or a few words in a gentle tone, so framed as not to admit of a reply, will be all, in many cases, that the patient can bear. I speak now of cases of somewhat severe disease. In these, if we have good evidence that the preparation for death is really made,—we must, as much as possible leave the sufferer in repose. We must bring religious truth before the mind chiefly to

strengthen and sustain it, and to keep there an assurance of the unfailing kindness and continued presence of the Savior, who has promised to love and to keep his children to the end.

We err often in such cases, by endeavoring to draw from the dying Christian, the assurances of his unwavering hope, or his last testimony to the reality of religion. We do this partly to procure subjects of pleasant recollection to friends, and partly to furnish new and corroborating evidence to the truth of Christianity. But it is wrong to make any such efforts. We may safely listen to and receive whatever the patient may spontaneously say; in fact, some of the most striking and most powerful evidences of the power of religion, have been furnished by the testimony which has been recorded from the lips of the dying. But if it is extorted, or even drawn out in the most delicate manner, it is of little worth.

Besides, it is sometimes even cruel to attempt to do this. It is painful and fatiguing in the extreme for the patient to be examined,—or to be drawn into a conversation so conducted as to have all the inquisitorial effects of an examination. Then the results, in such a case, are no safe criterion. The mind is so extensively and mysteriously affected by the complicated influences of disease, and nervous exhilaration or depression will so mingle with, and modify the religious feelings and hopes, that the language and expressions of sickness can be, in many cases, only faintly relied upon as real evidences of the spiritual state.

In cases of long continued and lingering disease, a greater latitude of religious conversation and intercourse with a christian patient, may be allowed than would be useful in a rapid and fatal disorder. In fact, in such a case, the patient may, in the course of several months of slow decline, make a very considerable progress in piety, and the christian visiter may have such a progress in mind,

Professions. Authority of physician.

and act with special reference to it in all his intercourse. In this case, however, there is one great danger; especially where the subject is young. The visiter insensibly allows the object before his mind, to change from a simple desire to promote the spiritual progress of his charge, into a desire to gratify himself with the indications of this progress. His conversations gradually assume a tendency to elicit expressions of piety, rather than to promote the silent progress of piety within. The consequence is, that after a time, some action or expression on the part of the patient, betrays lurking vanity or spiritual pride, which astonishes and grieves his visiter, and he opens his eyes to the sad fact, that he has been all the time cherishing affectation and love of display. I do not mean that it has been all affectation and love of display. These feelings have insensibly and slowly mingled with, and poisoned the piety which existed at first, and it is these which the deceived visiter has been, with far different intentions, steadily developing.

As the human heart is, we cannot be too cautious in all cases and under all circumstances, how we encourage and appear to be pleased with professions of any sort. The step is so short and so easily taken, from a profession springing spontaneously and honestly out of the feeling it represents, to a profession arising from a self complacency in the credit of that feeling, that the latter comes very readily after the former. And this consideration mingles with those others which have been already adduced, to urge us to be content when we have faithfully endeavored to do the good, without being too solicitous to ascertain exactly whether the good is done.

9. We close this series of directions with one which might very properly have been placed at the commencement of it. In all our intercourse with the sick, we must acknowledge and submit to the authority of the physician and the friends, in respect to the extent to which we may

go in regard to a spiritual influence upon them We ought not to violate by stealth or otherwise, the wishes of those upon whom Providence has placed the responsibility, and to whom he has given the control. I will not say that there may not be some rare exceptions, but certainly no one can doubt that where parental authority, in a case fairly within parental jurisdiction, or the orders of a physician who has the responsibility of life and death resting upon him, rise up like a wall in our way, there Providence does not intend that we shall go. Whatever good we might fancy that we could do by violating these sacred powers, we have no right to violate them. In fact we should do no good to violate them, for we should create a suspicion and jealousy which would close many more doors than we should thus unjustifiably open. It is well for the spiritual friend of the patient to have an understanding with the physician, and obtain some knowledge of the nature of the disease, especially in respect to its influence upon the mind; and then to endeavor to fall in with the plan of cure pursued, at least to do nothing to interfere with, or thwart it. We are bound to do this, even in a religious point of view, for the hope of salvation in the case of a sick sinner, lies generally more in a hope of recovery, than in any reasonable expectation of benefit from spiritual instructions given upon a dying bed. Besides, God has surrounded us in every direction, in this world, with limits and restrictions in our efforts to do good. We must keep ourselves fairly within these limits. What we cannot do without trespassing beyond them, we must be willing to leave undone. Thus, in order to accomplish our benevolent plans, we must never violate the rights of conscience or of property, or invade the just and proper liberty to which every man has an undefeasible title, or be guilty of artifice or of unworthy subterfuge, or infringe upon any sacred relations which God has established, and which he justly requires us to respect. We must go forward to our

work, not so anxious to effect our object, as to do nothing in any degree wrong in the attempt to effect it. We must conform most strictly and invariably to all those principles which we are endeavoring to promote, and never transgress them ourselves, in our eagerness to extend them to others. In a word, we must be upright, pure, honest, open and incorruptible in all we do. What we cannot effect in this way, we must suppose that God does not intend that we shall effect at all,—always remembering that a pure and an unspotted example of piety, is more efficacious in promoting the spread of the gospel, than any measures, whatever, which we have to carry into effect by the sacrifice of principle.

CHAPTER IX.

CHILDREN.

"It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

Suppose that a hundred healthy infants, each a few weeks old, were taken from the city of Constantinople, and arranged under the care of nurses, in a suite of apartments, in some public hospital. In an adjoining range of rooms, let another hundred, taken from the most virtuous families in Scotland, be placed. Take another hundred from the haunts of smugglers, or of the pirates which infest the West India Seas; another from the high nobility of the families of England, and another from the lowest and most degraded haunts of vice, in the faubourg St. Antoine, in Paris. Now, if such an infantile representation were made, of some of the most marked and most dissimilar of the classes, into which the Caucasian race has been divided, by the progress of time, and the doors of the various apart-

ments thrown open,—the question is, whether the most minute and thorough scrutiny could distinguish between the classes, and assign each to its origin. They are to be under one common system of arrangement and attendance, —and we have supposed all the subjects to be healthy, in order to cut off grounds of distinction, which an intelligent physician might observe in hereditary tendencies to disease. Under these circumstances, if the several collections be subjected to the most thorough examination, would any ingenuity or science be able to establish a distinction between them? Probably not. There would be the same forms and the same color;—the same instincts,—the same cries. The cradles which would lull the inmates of one apartment to repose, would be equally lulling to the others,—and the same bright objects, or distinct sounds, which would awaken the senses, and give the first gentle stimulus to mind, in one case, would do the same in all. Thus inspection alone of these specimens would not enable us to label them; and if they were to remain months, or even years under our care, for concealed and embryo differences to be developed, we should probably wait in vain.

But, instead of thus waiting, let us suppose that the five hundred children are dismissed, each to its mother and its home, and that they all pass through the years of childhood and youth, exposed to the various influences which surround them in the dwellings and neighborhoods to which they respectively belong;—among the bazars and mosques of the Turkish city, or the glens and hill sides of Scotland, or in the home of noise and violence, whether forecastle or hut,— of the bucaniers,—or in the nurseries and drawingrooms of Grovesnor Square, or the dark crowded alleys of the Parisian faubourg. Distribute them thus to the places to which they respectively belong, and leave them there, till the lapse of time has brought them to maturity;—then bring them all together, for examination again.

How widely will they be found to have separated now?

Though they commenced life alike and together, their paths began at once to diverge, and now, when we compare them, how totally dissimilar. Contrast the Turk with the Scot,—the hardened pirate, with the effeminate nobleman. Examine their characters thoroughly,—their feelings, their opinions, their principles of conduct, their plans of life, their pursuits, their hopes, their fears. Almost every thing is dissimilar. There is, indeed, a common humanity in all, but every thing not essential to the very nature of man is changed; and characters are formed, so totally dissimilar, that we might almost doubt the identity of the species.

There is another thing to be observed, too,—that every individual of each class, with scarcely a single exception, goes with his class, and forms a character true to the influences which have operated upon him in his own home. You will look in vain for a character of luxurious effeminacy among the pirates' sons, or for virtuous principle among children brought up in a community of thieves. You can find cases enough, of this kind, it is true, in works of fiction, but few in real life;—and those few are not real exceptions. They are accounted for, by the mixed influences, which, on account of some peculiar circumstances, bear upon some individuals, and modify the character which they might have been expected to form. The Turkish children are all Turks, unless there may be one here and there, among a million, whose course may have been deflected a little by some extraordinary circumstances in his history. So the Parisian children all become Frenchmen in their feelings and opinions, and principles of action;—the aristocratic children all become aristocratic; and all those who in London or Paris find their homes in the crowded quarters of vice,—if they are brought up thieves and beggars, thieves and beggars they will live.

And yet it is not education, in the common sense of that term, which produces these effects upon human character; that is, it is not formal efforts, on the part of parents and

friends, to instruct and train up the young to walk in their own footsteps. In respect to the acquisition of knowledge, and of accomplishments, great effort would be made to give formal instruction by some of the classes enumerated above; but in regard to almost all that relates to the formation of character,—principles of action,—the sentiments and the feelings,—the work is done by the thousand nameless influences which surround every child, and which constitute the moral atmosphere in which he spends his youthful years.

Now this kind of moral atmosphere, which is so effectual in determining the character which the children who grow up in the midst of it form, every one does a great deal to produce,—altogether more than he would at first suppose possible. So that our influence upon the young, is an exceedingly important department of our opportunities of doing good. In fact, God has assigned us a double duty to perform, while we remain here. First, to use the world well, while we continue in it; and, secondly, to prepare a generation to receive the trust, when we shall pass away from the scene. We are not only to occupy well ourselves, but to train up and qualify our successors.

Now the reader may, perhaps, think that these remarks, and what remains in this chapter, on the subject of the young, must be intended principally for parents. Far from it; for there are many relations in life, which give us a very free access to the young, and an influence over them as an inevitable result. One person is a parent, and consequently exercises a very controlling influence over the whole character and future prospects of his children. Another is a brother or sister, and enjoys opportunities of influence, almost as great as those of a father or mother. Another, who lives, perhaps, in a family where there are no children, is intimate in the families of neighbors or friends, and is thus thrown into frequent intercourse for years, with cousins and nephews and neices, who are all the time catching

his spirit and imbibing his principles. An uncle, or an aunt, in such a case, is very apt to imagine that they have nothing to do, but to keep in the good graces of their little relatives, by an occasional picture book or sugar toy. They forget the vast effects, which ten years of almost constant and yet unguarded intercourse must have; and still more, the very powerful influence which it *might* have, in giving a right moral turn to the sentiments and the feelings, and the whole cast of character, if the opportunity was properly improved. In fact, if we look back to our own early days, we shall remember in how many instances our opinions, and sentiments, and feelings, and, perhaps, our whole cast of character received a turn from the influence of an uncle, or an aunt, or neighbor. In my father's family, there was an antique pocketbook, of particolored worsted, —the admiration of our childish eyes,—a collection of the college compositions, and journals, and letters, of an amiable uncle, who died so early that his nephews could never know him, except through these remains. And many a rainy day, and many a winter evening was this pocketbook explored, as a mine of instruction and enjoyment. Moral principle was awakened and cultivated by the sentiments of an essay, and literary interest or ambition aroused by the spirit of a forensic discussion, or by the various memorials of a college life; and feelings of kindness and good will were cherished by the amiable and gentle spirit, which breathed in the letters or the journal. The whole undoubtedly exerted a vast influence, in giving form to the character and sentiments of the boys who had access to it; and yet how vastly greater would have been the influence of a constant intercourse with the living man.

Or, if the reader has neither of the above means of influence, he is or may be, perhaps, a Sabbath school teacher, or he may have boys in his employment, or he may, in his business, have frequent intercourse with many who come to him as messengers, or who stand by, unnoticed

Plan of the chapter.

but very attentive listeners to his directions or conversation. We thus, in a thousand other ways, have a connection with the young, which, though we may consider it slight, yet exerts a powerful influence in impressing our characters upon the plastic material which it reaches. Hence, all who wish to do good, should understand something of the character and susceptibilities of children, and make it a part of their constant care, to exert as happy and as salutary an influence upon them, as they can. I proceed to give some practical directions by which this must be done. They are not intended particularly for parents, but for all who have any intercourse with the young. They who have made this subject a particular subject of reflection, will find nothing new in these suggestions. They are the principles which common sense, and the results of common observation establish;—they are presented here, not as discoveries, but as obvious truths, to be kept in mind by those who would accomplish the most extensive and the most unmixed good, in this part of the widely extended vineyard of God. We scarcely need remark, that this direction will relate solely to the employment of human means, which can be really successful in promoting that thorough change in the desires and affections of the heart which constitutes salvation, only so far as they may be made instrumental to this end by the Spirit of God.

The plan of discussion which we shall pursue will be,

I. To consider some of the prominent characteristics of childhood, in accordance with which, an influence over the young, can alone be secured.

II. Deduce from them some general rules.

I. PROMINENT CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDHOOD.

To understand the course which must be taken, in order to secure an influence over children, we must first understand the leading principles and characteristics of child-

hood,—for it is these, which we are to act upon. In a summary expression of these, we may say that to exercise upon every object their dawning faculties, both of body and mind,—to learn all they can about the world into which they are ushered, presenting, as it does, so strange and imposing a spectacle to their senses,—to love those who sympathize with and aid them in these objects,—and to catch the spirit, and imitate the actions of those whom they thus love,—these we should say, are the great leading principles, by which the moral and intellectual nature of childhood is governed. These we shall consider in detail

1. To exercise their opening faculties.

The infant's first pleasure of this kind, is the employment of the senses, beginning with gazing at the fire, or listening with quiet pleasure to the sound of his mother's voice singing in his ear. While the little being just ushered into existence, lies still in his cradle, gazing upon the wall, or with his chin upon his nurse's shoulder, listens almost breathlessly to the song which is lulling him to sleep, how often does the mother say, "I should like to know exactly what he is thinking of,—what state of mind he is in." It is not very difficult, probably, to tell. Imagine yourself in his situation; look up upon the white wall, and banish all thought and reflection, as far as you can,—or rather conceive of yourself as having done it entirely, so as in imagination to arrest all operations of the mind, and retain nothing but vision. Let the light come in to the eye, and produce the sensation of whiteness, and nothing more. Let it awaken no thought, no reflection, no inquiry. Imagine yourself never to have seen any white before, so as to make the impression a novel one,—and also imagine yourself never to have seen *any thing*, or heard any thing, before, so as to cut off all ground for wonder or surprise. In a word, conceive of a mind, in the state of *simple sensation*, with none of those thousand feelings and thoughts, which sensation awakens in the spirit that is mature, and

you have probably the exact state of the infantile intellect, when the first avenues are opened, by which the external world is brought to act upon its embryo mind. Can it be surprising, then, under such circumstances, that even mere sensation should be pleasure?

As the child advances through the first months of existence, the mental part of the processes which the sensations awaken, are more and more developed; for we are not to consider the powers of mind as called at once into existence, complete and independent at the beginning, and then joined to the corporeal frame,—but as gradually developed in the progress of years, and that too, in a great measure, through the instrumentality of the senses. After some months have passed away, the impressions from without, penetrate, as it were, farther within, and awaken new susceptibilities which gradually develope themselves. Now each new faculty is a new possession, and the simple exercise of it, without end or aim, is and must be a great positive pleasure. First comes the power to walk. We are always surprised at seeing how much delight the child, who first finds that he has strength and steadiness to go upright across the room, finds, in going across again and again,—from table to chair, and from chair to sofa, as long as his strength remains. But why should we be surprised at it? Suppose the inhabitants of any town should find themselves suddenly possessed of the power of flying;—we should find them, for hours and days, filling the air, flitting from tree to tree, and from house top to steeple, with no end or aim, but the pleasure enjoyed in the simple exercise *of a new power*. The crowds which press to the ticket office of a new railroad,—or the multitudes of delighted citizens, brought out by an unexpected fall of snow in a warm climate, jingling about in every sort of vehicle that can be made to slide, show that man has not outgrown the principle.

Now this love of the exercise of the new power, is obvious enough, in the cases I have referred to, as seeing,

hearing, walking, and in many other cases, as using the limbs, producing sound by striking hard bodies, breaking, upsetting, piling up blocks, or dragging about crickets and chairs. It is precisely the same feeling, which would lead a man to go about, uprooting trees, or breaking enormous rocks, if he should suddenly find himself endued with the power of doing so. It is obvious enough, in these common physical operations, but we forget how many thousand mental processes there are, and others complicated, partly mental and partly physical, which possess the same charm in their incipient exercise, and which, in fact, make up a large portion of the occupations and enjoyments of childhood.

One of the earliest examples of a mental process, or rather power which the child is always pleased to exercise, *is understanding language*, or, to describe it more accurately, the susceptibility of having pleasant images awakened in the mind, by means of the magical power of certain sounds striking upon the ear. There are thousands who have observed the indications of this pleasure, who do not understand the nature and the source of it. Every mother, for example, observes that children love to be talked to, long before they can talk themselves; and they imagine that what pleases the listener, is his interest in the particular thing said,—whereas, it is probably only his interest in finding himself possessed of the new and strange power of understanding sounds. The mother says, "Where 's Father?" "Where 's Father?" and imagines that the child is pleased with the *inquiry*,—whereas it is only pleased that that sound,—"Father,"—striking upon its ear, can produce so strange an effect, as to call up to its conception a faint mental image of the man. It is this magic power of a word to produce a new and peculiar mental state, which is probably the source of pleasure. Hence the interest, which the little auditor will take, will not be in proportion to the connection, or the point, of the story; but

to the frequency of the words contained in it which call up familiar and vivid ideas. Thus a talk like this, "Fire, fire; pussy runs; tongs, tongs fall down; walk, run; Mary walk, Mary run,"—will be listened to by the child, who is just learning to listen to language, with as much pleasure, as the most connected or pointed little story. It is not, therefore, what is understood, but the mere power of understanding,—the first development of a new mental faculty, which pleases the possessor.

The reader may, perhaps, think at first, that this is rather a dim distinction. That it is, however, in reality, a broad and important one may be made obvious, thus. Suppose we should suddenly become possessed of the power of understanding the language of signs, used by the deaf and dumb, and should meet a mute, and observe him talking to his companion. How much interest we should take in watching his gesticulations, simply from the pleasure which the first exercise of the new power of understanding their meaning would give. It would be of no consequence what was the subject of the conversation. We should take as great an interest in the most common questions and replies, as in the most interesting narrative; for the source of our enjoyment, would not be our interest in what was said,—but the pleasure of first enjoying the power of understanding this new mode of saying it. So the very little child is pleased, not with the point or connectedness of your story, but by the strange production in his mind, of conceptions and images by the magic influence of sounds,—conceptions and images, which heretofore have only been produced, by the actual presence of their prototypes.

This is one of the simplest cases of the pleasure arising from the first exercise of a mental power. There are a thousand others, which come forth, one after another, all through the years of childhood and youth, and keep the young mind supplied with new, and still new sources of enjoyment. The amusements of children almost all derive

their charm from their calling into exercise these dawning powers, and enabling them to realize their possession. Digging in the ground,—making little gardens,—dressing and undressing and disciplining a doll,—playing store, and meeting, and company, and soldier,—and a thousand other things, call into play the memory, the imagination, the use of the limbs, and senses, and thus exercise all the powers which have not yet lost their novelty. In fact, these powers are so rapidly progressive, that they are always new.

This love of action now,—this pleasure in trying the new powers, is among the strongest of the propensities of childhood. It is certainly stronger than the appetites. At least, my observation has led me to think so, and to put the question to the test, in one case, I have addressed a boy five years old, at least as great a lover of sugar, and sugar dogs, as other boys of his years, who has come into my study, while I am penning these remarks, thus:

"Suppose, now, I should tell you, that you might either have four large lumps of sugar, or go and get some sticks and paper, and help me make my fire; which should you rather do?"

"Why,—I think I had rather help you make the fire."

"Well, suppose I should tell you, I was going to cut some paper into small pieces, and do up a little of my black sand in each piece; and that you might have your choice, either to sit up to the table and help me, or have a large piece of apple pie, or three sugar dogs, and one handsome sugar rabbit?"

The countenance of the child showed for an instant that it was a very serious question, but he said,

"I should rather help do up the sand,—if there are scissors enough," glancing an eye at the single pair of slender paper shears, which lay upon the table.

I have no doubt that a vast majority of children, from three to five years of age, would answer similar questions in a similar manner. What time and money are spent in

sweetmeats and expensive toys, to win an access for the donors to children's hearts, or to make them happy, while all the time the path to childish affection and enjoyment, lies in so totally different a direction!

Any one who will make childhood a study, by observing its peculiarities, and making experiments upon its feelings and tendencies, will find innumerable examples of the gratification they thus derive from the mere exercise of their nascent powers, without end or aim. There is enumeration, for example,—the power of conceiving of numbers, and their relations to one another. You may try this experiment upon it; take a young child, from three to four years of age, just old enough to begin to count, and sit up with him to a table with ten wafers, or kernels of corn, or coffee, before you. Let him look at the objects, until his interest in them, simply as objects, is satisfied, and then begin to count them and reckon them in various ways, so as gently to exercise his dawning powers of calculation. First count them all. Then count two of them, and two more, and then the whole four. Go on perhaps thus:

"There is one, and there is another, that makes two;—now there is another. How many do two and another, counted together, make? Let us see. One, two, three. They make three. Two things, and then another thing put with them, make three things.

"Now we will put them in a row, and begin at this end and count them. It makes ten. Now we will begin at the other end, and see if it makes the same. Yes, it makes ten. It is the same. If we count them from this end to that it makes ten, and if we count them from that end to this, it makes ten. Now we will begin in the middle," &c.

I give this, in order to show how extremely short and simple are the steps which must be taken, in order to enable the child to follow, when the reckoning powers are just beginning to be formed. Such steps may be indefinitely varied, by a little ingenuity, while the mind of the child is

all the time occupied with simply reckoning numbers, i. e. exercising a power which he then, almost for the first time, finds that he possesses. In fact, he can hardly be said to have possessed it before. The exercise not merely calls them into play; it almost calls them into being. Go on, then, with the work, for the purpose of seeing how long he will continue to be interested. Unless some other object of excitement, has, at the time of the experiment, possession of his mind, *your* patience will be exhausted, long before *he* will be ready to get down.

Such examples are numberless. In fact, let an intelligent observer, when he sees children busily engaged in some scheme of amusement or occupation, pause a moment and look over them, and ask "What now is the secret source of pleasure here? What constitutes the charm? What power of body or mind is it, whose exercise here gives the enjoyment?" Such inquiries, and the analysis to which they lead, will give one a deep insight in the character and feelings of childhood, and the great springs of its action. He who would gain an ascendency over children must thus study them, and aid them in this their leading desire Make work for them,—lay before them objects and occupations, which shall make them acquainted with their powers, by calling them out into action; and lead them to a mode of action, which will not interfere with the comforts or rights of others. No one can really understand children in this respect, and sympathize with them, and aid them, without finding their hearts bound soon to him, by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection. But we must pass on to the other leading principles of childhood, above enumerated.

2. To learn all they can about the world into which they find themselves ushered.

Next to their desire to act, their strongest impulse is a desire to know. This, like the other, has been universally observed; but, like the other, its true nature is not very

exactly understood. It is not so much a desire to know what is remarkable or curious, as to know what *is;* it is the interest of *knowing*, rather than an interest in the extraordinariness of what is known. With them, the distinction between what is common and what is extraordinary is lost, or rather it has never been acquired. All things are new to them, and consequently if you tell them *something*, or explain to them something, it is of but little consequence what it is.

"My child is continually asking for stories,—more stories,—until my powers of imagination and invention are exhausted,—what shall I do?" has been the exclamation a thousand times. It shows that the mother who makes it, does not distinctly understand the nature of the intellectual want which she is called upon to supply. "Stories" mean *talk*,—or at least, any talk about what is new, will satisfy the appetite for stories. Set off, then, on any track, and talk. Suppose you could, yourself, meet a man who had been in the moon, and he should sit down and describe accurately and vividly what he saw there, any day;—how he took a walk, and what objects he saw, and what incidents he met with; or suppose he should describe the interior of a room,—any room whatever, there,—the furniture, the instruments, their uses and construction;—why, there would not be an hour of his residence in the planet, that would not afford abundant materials for a conversation to which we should listen with the deepest interest and pleasure. Well, now we must remember that this world is all moon to children, and we can scarcely go amiss in describing it. There is no hour in your day, and no object you see, which is not full of subjects of interest to them.

For instance, suppose a child comes to his mother's side while she is sitting at her work, and wants a story She casts her eyes about her for a subject, and as my sand-box is the object that presents itself first to my attention, I will suppose it to be the one that arrests hers. "Come,"

The sand-box. Talk about it. A thousand subjects.

she says, "I will tell you about my sand-box." She then shows it to him, unscrews the top, points out the various parts, and explains them. It is a little broader at the bottom than in the middle, that it may stand steady,—and at the top, that it may receive the sand easier from the paper. She shows why there are many small holes, instead of one large one,—what the sand is used for,—how it sticks upon the wet ink and not upon the dry,—why black, rather than white sand is used, and why the box is formed into a sort of basin at the top. And each one of these particulars, is a subject of itself, as copious as the whole box which suggested them. The first, for instance, the broadness of the bottom, to secure steadiness of support, may lead to other similar cases;—the bottom of the lamp, or the inkstand, or a hundred other things similarly constructed, and the principles by which steadiness is given to chairs, tables, &c. by the position of the legs. In the same manner, each of the other parts of the article is, of itself, an independent topic.

Thus every object in the room is the subject for a lecture, or a story of half an hour. A pin, a wafer, a key, a stick of wood,—there is nothing which is not full of interest to children, if you will only be *minute* enough. Take a stick of wood. Tell how the tree it came from, sprung up out of the ground,—years ago; how it grew every summer by the sap; how this stick was first a little bud, next year a shoot, and by and by a strong branch; how a bird perhaps built her nest on it; how squirrels ran up and down, and ants crept over it; how the woodman cut down the tree, &c. &c., expanding all the particulars into the most minute narrative. It is surprising that any mother can ever complain that she is at a loss for subjects of conversation with her child.

For besides this whole class of subjects,—i. e. descriptions of the common things the child sees, there is not a half an hour in a day, *whose history* would not furnish a

Describe any thing to children.

highly interesting narrative to a child. Take, for instance, your first half hour in the morning; how the room looked when you awoke,—what you first thought of,—how you proceeded in dressing,—the little difficulties you met with, and their remedies; what you first saw when you came down stairs, and what you did,—when you first met your little auditor,—what you thought, and did, and said. The whole would naturally suggest and include much which would be new information to the child; although this would not be the principal source of its interest. The pleasure which the hearer would derive from it, is the gratification of the mysterious appetite of the human mind for language. If you describe nothing which the child did not know before, he still enjoys the description. Our readers will not dispute this, if they call to mind the fact, that the most interesting passages they themselves read in books, are graphic accounts of scenes or events which they have witnessed themselves. The charm of all good description, consists in its presenting to the reader, in spirited, graphic language, that with which, as a reality, he is most perfectly familiar. Hence it happens, that if we take up a traveller's account of our country, we turn first to read the description which he has given of our own town; partly, perhaps, from curiosity to know his opinion of us, but still, in a great degree, for the simple pleasure of seeing, through the medium of language, that with which we are perfectly familiar by the eye.

Our object, then, in talking to children, is not to find something new, and strange, and wonderful. We have only to clothe in language, such conceptions and truths, as they can understand, without racking our invention to produce continual novelty. Conversation conducted thus, though, at first view, it might seem mere amusement, will be, in fact, very highly useful. The child will rapidly acquire familiarity with language by it, which is one of the most important acquisitions he can make. Then you will

insensibly say a great deal which will be new to your auditor, though it may seem common place to you; and though you may not aim always at moral instruction, the narratives and descriptions you give, will spontaneously take from your own mind, a moral *expression*, which will have great influence upon his.

Thus every half hour of the day will furnish abundant materials for a long narrative. Any walk which you have taken, or piece of work which you have done, or any plan that you have in mind, if properly described, will abundantly feed and satisfy, for the time being, your child's desire to know; for you must always remember it is not necessary that what you say should be particularly interesting to you, in order to interest him.

Or, if you wish occasionally for something more strictly a story, set off at once, with any hero, and in any direction; you cannot go amiss. "A boy once thought he would go out and take a walk, so he put on his hat, and took a little cane, and went down by a brook behind his father's house." Say so much without any idea of what you are going to say next, and give the reins to the imagination and follow on. Do not task your powers to find something new and strange; every thing is new and strange to childhood. You may therefore save yourself the trouble of research, and take what comes. Let your hero see something on a tree, and wonder what it is, and find that it is a knot,—and then see something else, and find it is a bird's nest, and make various efforts to get up to it. Let him meet other boys, and sit down on a log to rest, or find a spring of water and try various ways to drink, or throw little stones into a brook, the size and shape of each, the kind of place they fall into, and the various noises made by them, to be specified;—and when you are tired of talking, leave your hero in the woods, with the promise to finish the account of his adventures and his return, the next time.

Subjects.	Fiction.	A danger.

A walk in a village, an imaginary history of a man's bringing a load of wood to market, or an account of a boy's making a collection of playthings in a cabinet,—what he had and how he arranged them;—or the common every day adventures of a cat about house, now sleeping in the corner, now watching at a mouse's hole in the dark cellar, and now ascending to the house top and walking along on the edge of the roof, looking down to the boys in the yard below. I mention these, not to propose them, particularly, but to show how wide is the field, and how endless the number and the variety of the topics which are open before you. I ought to remark here, however, that the distinction between what is true, and what is only imaginary in its details, ought to be clearly explained to the child, and he ought to know when you are narrating real, and when fictitious incidents.

Parents sometimes entertain some fears that there may be danger in narrating any thing to children which is not historically true, lest it should lead them first to undervalue strict truth, and finally to form the habit of falsehood These fears are not without some grounds,—for it does require careful watch and constant effort, in any case, to form and preserve a habit of veracity, in children. Whether you relate fictitious stories to them or not, you will often find in them, propensities to deceit and falsehood, which it will sometimes require all your moral power to withstand We cannot, therefore, avoid the *danger* of children's falling into the sin of falsehood. The only question is, how we can most advantageously meet and overcome it.

Now it seems to me that we cannot most easily do it, by confounding fictitious narration with falsehood, and condemning both. For no one pretends that the narration of fictitious incidents, is, in itself, criminal. It is objected to, only, as having a tendency to lead to what is criminal; the *intention to deceive* being essential to the guilt of falsehood. The question is, then, where, in attempting to guard chil-

dren from falsehood, we can most advantageously take our stand. Shall we assume the position that all narration not historically true, is wrong? or shall we show them, that intention to deceive is the essence of the guilt of falsehood, and contend only against that. My own opinion is, that it is easier and better, in every respect, to do the latter. If the distinction you make with them, is between what is historically true on one side, and all that is imaginary on the other, they can get but a shadowy idea of its being really a distinction between right and wrong. If, however, you bring them at once to the line between honesty and deception, they can see easily and readily that you have brought them to the boundaries of guilt. In maintaining this distinction, you will have reason and conscience clearly assenting, and here, consequently, you can raise the strongest fortification against sin. On the other hand, if you extend your lines of defence so as to include what you admit is not wrong, but only supposed to be dangerous, you extend greatly your circle of defence, you increase the difficulty of drawing a clear line of demarcation, and, notwithstanding all you can do or say, your theory condemns the mode of instruction adopted by the Savior.

We may, therefore, indulge the imagination freely in children, but we must raise an impassable wall, on the first confines of *intention to deceive*, and guard it with the greatest vigilance and decision.

I would, therefore, for example, if a little child should ask for a story, say, perhaps,

"Shall I tell you something real or something imaginary?"

"What is 'imaginary?'"

"Why, if I should make up a story about a squirrel named Chipperee, that lived in the woods, and tell you what he did all day; how he came out of his hole in the morning, and what he saw, and what he found to eat, and what other squirrels he met; and about his going down to a

little brook to drink, and carrying home nuts for the winter, &c.—when all the time, there never was any such squirrel, but I made up the whole story,—that would be imaginary.'

"But father, that would not be true. Is it not wrong to say any thing that is not true?"

"No, it is not always wrong to say what is not strictly true. If I were to say any thing that was not true, in order *to deceive you*, that would be wrong. For example, if I had some bitter medicine to give you, and should cover it up with sugar, and tell you it was all sweet sugar, that would be to deceive you, and that would be wrong. But if I imagine a story about a squirrel, just to amuse you, and teach you in a pleasanter way how squirrels live, —when I tell you plainly, that it is not a true account of any particular squirrel,—should you think that there would be any thing wrong in that?"

Thus it seems that in this case, as in most others, it will be easiest, safest, and most expedient, as well as most philosophical, to draw the line at the real point where guilt begins. Here only, is there a tangible, moral distinction which children can appreciate, and though the work of keeping them off of the forbidden grounds of deception and falsehood, will require, in any case, much effort and care, it seems as if this was the most proper place to take the stand. If, however, after mature reflection, any parents think differently, and still consider all fiction dangerous, they ought, undoubtedly, to be controlled by their own conscientious convictions, and abstain from it altogether.

We have mentioned three great classes of subjects, which may supply mothers with means of conversation with their children, so as to gratify their almost insatiable appetite for knowledge. We have gone thus fully into this part of the subject, on account of the universality of the complaint on the part of those who have the care of young children, that they do not know what to tell them. The difficulty arises from having a standard too high,—

The senses the avenue. Example.

striving after something new and striking, or possessing peculiar poetic or dramatic interest, and forgetting that every thing is new and striking to children, and that, consequently, there is scarcely any thing which can be seen, or heard of, or conceived, which, properly expressed, in language suited to their powers, will not possess a charm.

But how shall it be expressed in proper language? For having thus attempted to show, to those interested in children, what to tell them, we may perhaps devote a few paragraphs to considering the best way to tell it.

(1.) Address the mind of the child through the senses, or through those faculties of the mind by which the impressions of the senses are recognised or recalled. In other words, present every thing in such a way that it may convey vivid pictures to the mind. The senses are emphatically the great avenues to knowledge, in childhood, and it is consequently through them that we can have the easiest access. I can best illustrate what I mean, by contrasting two ways of telling the same story.

"A man had a fine dog, and he was very fond of him. He used to take a great deal of care of him, and give him all he wanted, and, in fact, he did all he could to make him comfortable, so that he should enjoy a happy life. Thus he loved his dog very much, and took great pleasure in seeing him comfortable and happy."

This now presents very few sensible images to the mind of the child. In the following form, it would convey the same general ideas, but far more distinctly and vividly

"There was once a man who had a large, black and white dog beautifully spotted. He made a little house for him out in a sunny corner of the yard, and used to give him as much meat as he wanted. He would go and see him sometimes, and pat his head, while he was lying upon his straw in his little house. He loved his dog."

No one at all acquainted with children need be told how much stronger an interest the latter style of narration would excite. And the difference is, in a philosophical point of view, that the former is expressed in abstract terms, which the mind comes to appreciate fully, only after long habits of generalization; in the latter, the meaning comes through sensible images, which the child can picture to himself with ease and pleasure, by means of those faculties of the mind, whatever they may be, by which the images presented by the senses, are perceived, at first, and afterwards renewed through the magical stimulus of language This is the key to one of the great secrets of interesting children, and in teaching the young generally. Approach their minds through the senses. Describe every thing as it presents itself to the eye and to the ear. A different course is, indeed, often wise; as for example, when you wish to exercise and develope the power of generalization and abstraction,—but generally, when your wish is merely to interest, or to convey knowledge; i. e. where you wish to gain the readiest and most complete access to the heart, these are the doors. You use others after a time, occasionally, for the sake mainly of having them opened and in use.

The intelligent reader will be able to apply this rule to all the classes of subjects mentioned under the preceding head, and will see at once how much additional interest may be thrown over the conversations and narratives described, by following this rule. We might well follow out the principle, and its illustration and application to the various stages of childhood and youth, and the proper limits of it; for its limits must be observed, or else we shall make the pupil the helpless dependent upon his senses, for life. There is, however, little danger of passing these limits in early years. The great difficulty with instructions and addresses to childhood, and the books written for them, is not want of simplicity, as is commonly supposed, but

generality,—*abstractness*,—a mode of exhibiting a subject or a train of thought, which presents no distinct conceptions to a mind which is unaccustomed to any elements of thought which have not form or color. So that that which is precise, and striking, and clear to the mind of the speaker, is vague, and undefined, and inappreciable to the unformed minds to which it is addressed. But we must pass on.

(2.) Be exceedingly minute in the details of what you describe. Take very short steps, and take each one very distinctly. If, for instance, you are narrating to a man, you may simply say, if such an incident occurs in the course of the narrative,—that your hero "went down to the shore and got into a boat and pushed off." Your hearer has probably got into a boat often enough to understand it. But if you are talking to a child, he will be more interested if you say, "he went down to the shore and found a boat there. One end of the boat, the front part, which they call the bows, was up against the shore, a little in the sand. The other end was out on the water, and moved up and down gently with the waves. There were seats across the boat, and two oars lying along upon the seats. The man stepped upon the bows of the boat. It was fast in the sand, so that it did not sink under him. Then he took up one of the oars and began to push against the shore to push himself off. But as he was standing upon the bows, his weight pressed the bows down hard upon the sand, and so he could not push the boat off. Then he went to the other end of the boat, stepping over the seats. The other end of the boat is the *stern*. The stern sank a little, and the boat rocked from one side to the other, and made the oar which was on the seats rattle. There was nothing but water under the stern of the boat, and that was what made it unsteady. The man stepped carefully, and when he was fairly in the stern, he reached his oar out again, and now he could push it off The bows

Explain minutely. The black sand.

rubbed slowly back, off of the sand, and in a minute the whole boat was floating on the water."

We have given this thus minutely, to show what almost infinite expansion the most common incidents, which are passed over usually by a word, in narratives addressed to men, are capable of, when described to children. And it is in this minute and particular way that they wish to have every thing detailed which they have not become absolutely familiar with. In fact, in writing, even, for the mature, the success of the composition depends much upon the degree of fidelity with which those most minute circumstances which give to any scene its expression, are described to the mind. But in addressing children, this is altogether more necessary. For the complicated steps with which long acquaintance with the world have familiarized men, so as to make them the simple elements of higher combinations, retain with children all their original complicateness, and must be expanded and exhibited in minute detail. It would be well, for example, when talking of the sand-box, in addressing men, to say, "The sand is black rather than white, that it may correspond in color with the ink that it covers, and preserve a contrast with the paper." This would not do for a child. "No: the *words* would not be understood," you say. True, but if we alter the words it would then not be much better. Thus, "It is black rather than white, that it may be like the ink, and different from the paper." A boy four or five years old, in hearing that, will probably ask why you want the sand different from the paper, or else pause and reflect, trying to take, himself, the intermediate mental steps necessary to a full understanding of the explanation. The reason given to him in full would be, "Suppose the sand was white, like flour, and we pour it on. It would stick on the letters when the ink was wet and make them look white. Now the paper is white too, and you would hardly see that there were any letters there. But by having the sand black, the letters

continue to look black after the sand is on them, and of course are plainly to be seen on the white paper." This, which would be a tedious explanation to a man, even if he had never heard of sand,—would be just satisfactory to a small boy.

Thus, every thing should be related and explained minutely; and any persons who will pause a little upon this principle, and consider it in its application to common subjects and to the common conversation they hold with children,—they will see that every event, every incident, every fact, every phenomenon, however common, and every object of sight or hearing is connected with a thousand associations and trains of thought, which may thus be expanded,—and they will wonder that they could ever be at a loss for materials for conversation.

(3.) Let your style be abrupt and striking, and give the reins entirely to the imagination. Aim at the utmost freedom of form and manner, and let your tones and inflexions be highly varied. The tones expressive of emotion are instinctive, not acquired; as is proved by their universal similarity among all nations, and by the fact that children have them in greater, not less perfection than men. The style, too, should be abrupt and pointed, and every thing illustrated with action. At least, this is one element of interest to be used in a greater or less degree at discretion. We find that we are dwelling too much on these details and must hasten forward, though this particular topic might well occupy a dozen pages. We will, however, take one example. It may be our old story of the man who was kind to his dog. We have given two modes of commencing it, the second adding very much to the interest which the child would take in it. But by our present rule of giving abruptness and point, and striking transition to the style, we can give it a still greater power. Suppose the narrator, with a child on each knee, begins thus,

"A man one pleasant morning was standing upon the

steps of his door, and he said, 'I think I will go and see my dog Towser.'"

"Now, where do you think his dog Towser lived?"

"I don't know," will be the reply of each listener, with a face full of curiosity and interest.

"Why old Towser was out in a little square house which his master had made for him in a corner of the yard. So he took some meat in his hand for Towser's breakfast. Do you think he took out a plate, and a knife and fork?

"This man was very kind to Towser; his beautiful, spotted, black and white Towser;—and when he got to his house he opened the door and said,

"'Towser, Towser,—come out here Towser.'

"So Towser came running out, and stood there wagging his tail. His master patted him on the head. You may jump down on your hands and feet and I will tell you exactly how it was. You shall be Towser. Here, you may get under the table which will do for his house. Then I will come and call you out and pat you on the head;" &c. &c.

We go into these minute details with no little hesitation, as some of our readers may perhaps consider them beneath the dignity of a moral treatise. But when, as we have occasionally paused, on this account, while penning the preceding paragraphs, and hesitated whether it was best to proceed, we have thought how many children there are to be made happy through these simple principles,—and how many mothers there are, and older brothers and sisters, who, never having philosophized upon the subject, may be considerably aided by these suggestions, obvious as they may be,—and how many, many hours of intercourse between parent and child, may be changed from times of weariness and tedium, to those of profit and pleasure, by a knowledge of these simple avenues to the childish heart,—we have taken courage and gone on. To know how to make a single child happy for half an hour is indeed

a little thing; but the knowledge acquires importance and dignity, when we consider how many millions of children there are to be affected by it,—and how many half hours in the life of each, may be rescued by these means, from listless uneasiness, and given to improvement and happiness. Thus the objects though comparatively trifling, when regarded in severalty and detail, rise to dignity and importance, when we consider their vast aggregation. But to return.

An abrupt and pointed style, and varied modes of illustration mingled with action, will give spirit and interest, even to many *moral* instructions. But we must not dwell on this point; and we pass on to the third great characteristic of childhood. The reader will, we hope, keep in mind the plan of our discussion. We are considering some of the great characteristics of childhood, preparatory to some practical directions for gaining, through them, an access to the heart; and having examined, 1. Love of action, and 2. Love of acquiring knowledge, we now pass to the third, viz.

3. Affection for those from whom they receive aid and sympathy in their desires. Gratitude in the young partakes of the general childishness of their character; and it is not, perhaps, very surprising, that it should be most strongly awakened by such kindness as they can most sensibly appreciate.

In fact, the conditions of affection on the part of children seem to be two. The first is, that the kindness intended to awaken it should be on their level, as it were,—i. e. that it should show itself in favors which they can understand and appreciate. If in a case of dangerous sickness, an aunt comes and watches over the child day after day, and by means of this incessant watchfulness and care, preserves his life, maintaining, however, during his sickness and convalescence, a cold and reserved look and

demeanor,—there will be but a slight awakening of gratitude and affection in the heart of the patient. He sees his indefatigable nurse moving in a region of thought and feeling which is far away from him, and inapproachable. She does not come near to him, and he *cannot* go near to her. Under these circumstances, it is impossible for him to realize that the unwearied care which he sees bestowed upon him, can arise from affection to him personally. He considers it as a sort of thing of course, and it awakens little gratitude or affection.

This tendency in the heart of a child, is in perfect keeping with the general laws of human nature in respect to gratitude and love. For these feelings are awakened, not by the *deeds* of kindness which we experience from others, but by the feelings of kindness of which we consider the deeds an indication. It is a sympathetic action of heart upon heart, through actions, or words, or looks, as the medium; and consequently the effect is not in proportion to the greatness of the favors, but to the distinctness with which they conduct the mind of the receiver to the love which originated them. Hence it is, that unless the kindness you render to children is such as they can fully appreciate, it will not produce its proper effects; but if it is such as they can appreciate, i. e. if it is within their sphere, it will produce these effects. Many persons are often surprised to see how easily some of their acquaintances will gain the affection of children, and acquire an ascendency over them. But this is the secret of it. They come down,—I do not mean in the actions and demeanor, but in the nature of the favors they show to them,—to their level. They excite or employ their mental powers; they speak a kind word indicating interest in their plays or pursuits; they aid them in their own little schemes, or at least regard them with looks and words of kindness. These are indications of a *feeling of kindness* which the child can understand; and as we have before seen, it is in

proportion to the distinctness with which the feeling of kindness is perceived in one heart, that gratitude and affection are awakened in another.

The second condition on which the affection and gratitude of children is to be secured, is, that the favors which call for it should be sincere; or at least that the child should have sufficient evidence of sincerity. A splendid toy, however adapted to interest the child, if sent to him by a relative or an acquaintance of his parents, who really cares little about him, will be received with selfish gratification perhaps, but with little gratitude towards the donor. In fact, this condition stands on the same foundation with the other. The child must see, through the favor bestowed, a feeling of real kindness in the one who bestowed it,—for it is this emotion in one heart, which, by a kind of sympathy, awakens the corresponding emotion in another. The present or the favor, aids only as the medium by which the inter-communication is made, and if the feeling is seen without it, it will produce its effects. Thus one person may make the most valuable and costly presents to two children, and another will produce a stronger impression upon their hearts, and awaken a more friendly feeling, and connect himself with them by more pleasant and permanent associations by the mere manner in which he looks at them, as he passes by, while they are playing in the street.

4. The fourth great characteristic of children is their disposition to catch the spirit, and imitate the actions of those whom they thus love. Probably this imitative or rather sympathetic principle, has more influence in the formation of early character, than any other; nay, perhaps, than all others conjoined. Associations and sympathy have far more influence with children, than argument or reasoning. Or rather, we might almost say, associations and sympathy have all the influence, and argument none at all. How often do parents attempt to reason with children in respect to some duty or command, by way of facilitating

the performance, whereas the effect is directly the reverse. The discussion unsettles the subject, throws a doubt about the duty, for all argument of course, presupposes a question in respect to the subject of it. It therefore almost always makes it harder for the child to obey, than it was before. Reasoning upon the general principles of duty, at proper times, when the mind of the pupil is in a state of repose, is highly important as a branch of instruction, as will hereafter more fully be shown. But after all it has comparatively little effect upon the formation of the habits and character. The cause of this is that the powers of ratiocination are among the last that are developed,—certainly among the last to come in for a share in the government of the conduct and character. If the reader has the disposition and the skill to experiment a little upon childhood in this respect, he will be astonished to find how feeble and unformed are the powers necessary for perceiving a logical sequence, and how entirely a pleasant association will usurp the place and exercise the control belonging legitimately to sound deduction. Hence the numerous prejudices and prepossessions of childhood,—as for instance, the preference for the small silver coin over the large bank note; argument and explanation being often entirely insufficient to overcome the associations of value connected with the appearance of the former.

On a question of a name for an infant brother, a boy three or four years old, expressed and persisted in a preference for George over Francis, which was generally voted for by the family. To see how great and unquestioned the control of mere association might be, in his mind, I said to him,

"If his name is Francis, you can, by and by, when he grows up, say, 'Mother, may I take Francis out to ride?' and mother will say, 'Yes.' Then you can take Francis up and carry him out and put him in your little wagon, and take hold of the handle, and then say, 'Francis, are you

all ready?' and Francis will say 'Yes.' Then you can draw him about a little way, and after a little while bring him back and say, 'Here, mother, I have brought Francis back safe.'—Do you not think, then, that his name had better be Francis?"

"Yes, I do," said he, cordially; convinced and converted completely, by this precious specimen of logic.

Thus the reader will find, on scrutinizing the conduct of children, that pleasant associations have more influence in determining their preferences and habits, moral, intellectual and physical, than almost all others. The reasoning powers ought to be cultivated, and to cultivate them successfully, children must be led to employ them on the various subjects which daily come before them; but while this process is going on, we must take care that the other great avenue to the soul, which is opened so early, and which affords so easy an access, should be occupied well.

If, then, in accordance with the previous heads of this discussion, you take such an interest in the children around you, as to secure their gratitude and love, you have formed in their minds strong, pleasant associations with your character, and conduct, and feelings, whatever they may be. You will find, consequently, that you will have an immense ascendency over them. They will think as you think, and feel as you feel. They will catch your expressions, and the tone of your voice; your looks, your attitudes; your habits and peculiarities, good and bad,—the very same things, which, if they disliked you, they would mimic and ridicule. So that he who associates freely with children, and by his sympathy and regard for them, acquires their love, will leave an impress of his own character upon theirs, which all the years of after life will never remove. This will be more peculiarly the case with those higher sentiments, and opinions, and principles of action, which are formed in the more advanced years of youth;—they are caught by sympathy from the mind and

heart of some friend whom the pupil loves. Judicious reasoning may help to give permanence to their throne, but its foundation is in this sympathetic influence, which argument will be utterly insufficient to withstand. In the same manner bad principles, bad sentiments and feelings are communicated to the youthful heart,—not mainly by sophistical reasonings, nor by formal efforts on the part of the corrupt to instruct their pupils in the principles of depravity. False reasoning and deliberate attempts to corrupt are undoubtedly often employed with fatal effect, but the great prevailing principle of the spread of vice is *moral contagion;*—the production of a diseased moral state in one, by the proximity of its like in another.

Here is the failure of many parents. They stand aloof from their children, occupied by business and cares, or else having no sympathy with their peculiar feelings and childlike propensities. The heart of the father, therefore, does not keep so near to that of the child, that there may be communicated to the one the healthy, virtuous action of the other. This place of influence is left to be taken possession of by any body,—a servant, a neighbor, or a boy in the streets,—and the father aims at forming the character of his son, by addressing to him from time to time, as his occupations may give him opportunity, plenty of sound argument and good advice! The boy receives them in silence, and the father hopes that they produce an impression. The downward progress which his heart is making, by his intimacy with sin, is not perceived, but at last, when he is twenty, it can be no longer concealed, and the father perceives to his astonishment that all his good instructions have been utterly thrown away. It is the ascendency of affection, and that founded on such evidences of interest and good will, as the child can himself appreciate, which will alone give us any considerable power; and if we secure the affection we shall inevitably wield the power.

Having thus considered the first general division of this chapter according to our plan, we pass to the second.

II. PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS.

1. It will be well for the reader, if he desires to accomplish as much as he may, through his influence over the young, to explore the ground first, distinctly, that is, to look around him, and call to mind distinctly, the youthful individuals over whom he must or can exert an influence. In fact, we should often do this in our hours of meditation, when looking over our plans of usefulness and the manner in which we are carrying them forward. By this means, we shall keep before our minds a distinct idea of the extent and boundaries of our field, and preserve a more steady interest in it. A general survey like this, of what we have to do, is, in all departments of duty, necessary, in order to give system, and steadiness, and thoroughness to our work.

2. Make it a special object of attention and effort, to gain such an influence and ascendency as has been already described, over the minds of the children whom you shall find thus within your reach; the influence of interest and attachment. Parents often pay too little attention to this. Their intercourse with children is only the necessary intercourse of command and obedience. A father who devotes some time daily, to interesting himself in the pursuits and pleasures of his children, talking with them, playing with them, or reading or telling them stories, will gain an ascendency over them, which, as they grow up, will be found to be immensely powerful. They are bound together by common feelings, by ties of affection and companionship, which have a most controlling moral influence upon the heart. It is, however, often neglected. The man overwhelmed with business, or burdened with cares, does not descend to the level of the child. He sees

that his boys are trained up according to rule, confined by proper restraints, and supplied with proper instruction;—but no strong ties of interest or affection, reconcile the little pupil to the restraints, or give allurement to the instruction; and at length, when he is passing from twelve to fifteen, or from fifteen to twenty, the parent gradually finds, as we have before explained, that though all has been to his eye right, his child has been, in heart and inward character, going on in a course, totally different from the one he intended. The alarmed and disappointed parent tries to bring back his son,—but he finds, to his surprise and sorrow, that he has no hold upon him. They are, in heart, strangers to each other. Though they have breakfasted, dined, and supped together, for fifteen years, they have been, in fact, strangers to each other, all the time. They have moved in different circles,—have had different pleasures, different pains, different hopes, and different fears. The son could not ascend to the region occupied by the father, and the father *would* not descend to that of the son. Thus they have been sundered, and the father finds that he has no hold over the heart of his child, only, when it is too late to acquire it.

But perhaps you are not a parent. You are an older brother or sister, still, yourself, under your father's roof. If now, you really wish to do good, your most important sphere of duty is that little circle of children, who, next to their parents, look up to you. In this case, it should be your first concern to gain an ascendency over their minds;—an ascendency based on their regard for your moral worth, and an affection inspired by your kindness and interest in them.

In the same manner, whatever may be your connection with children, whether you are their teacher in a common or a Sabbath school, or their father or mother, or their governess or guardian, or their neighbor, or their brother or sister,—you must first secure their interest and affec-

tion, or you can do them little good. If they dislike you personally, they will instinctively repel the moral influence you may endeavor to exert upon them. If you have no sympathy with their childish feelings, you can gain no sympathy in their hearts, for the sentiments and principles you may endeavor to inculcate upon them. If, however, you can secure their affection and sympathy, your power over them is almost unbounded. They will believe whatever you tell them, and adopt the principles and feelings you express, simply because they are yours. They will catch the very tone of your voice, and expression of your countenance, and reflect spontaneously, the moral image, whatever it may be, which your character may hold up before them.

3. Never attempt to acquire an ascendency over children by improper indulgence. It is one of the mysteries of human nature, that indulgence never awakens gratitude or love in the heart of a child. The boy or girl who is most yielded to, most indulged, is always the most ungrateful, the most selfish, and the most utterly unconcerned about the happiness or the suffering of father and mother Pursue then, a straight forward, firm and decided course; calm, yet determined,—kind, yet adhering inflexibly to what is right. This is the way to secure affection and respect, whether it be in the intercourse of parent with child, brother with sister, teacher with pupil, general with soldier, or magistrate with citizen. Yes, the youngest child, when allowed to conquer, though, perhaps, gratified at his success, has sagacity enough to despise the weakness and want of principle which yielded to him. He cannot feel either respect or affection. In the same manner, you cannot depend upon presents. Unreasonable indulgence and profusion of presents, are the two most common modes of endeavoring to buy the good will of the young. But, the slightest knowledge of human nature ought to teach us that love cannot be bought, and if we were without even

this little knowledge, a few trials would be sufficient, one would think, to convince us that these things, at least, cannot buy it. Just so far as they are indications of your sympathy and affection for the child who receives them, so far they will tend to win his love in return. But other indications of this sympathy and affection on your part will answer just as well. Presents alone, have far less influence in awakening the affection and gratitude of children, than kind words; and the most valuable gift, coldly given, will not win a boy's heart half so effectually, as sitting down with him for a few minutes on the bank, and helping him make his whistle.

5. The ascendency and the influence thus described being once gained over the children with whom you are connected, the rest of the work is easy. You have only to exhibit right conduct, and exemplify and express right feelings, and they will spontaneously imitate the one, and insensibly, but surely imbibe the other. This they will inevitably do, whether the expectation of it be a part of your plan or not. Whatever principles they see that you habitually cherish, they will themselves adopt, and they will catch the language, and tone, and manner, and even the very look with which you maintain them. And this, too, whether the principles are good or bad. If you are fond of dress, or applause, or admiration, or money, the children who hear your conversation,—if they love you,—will learn to be fond of them too. If they see that you love duty, and your Savior, and are living in the habitual fear of sin, and in steady efforts to prepare for a future world,—they will feel a stronger influence leading them to the same choice, than any other human means can exert. In a word, if they love you, there will be a very strong tendency in their hearts to vibrate in unison with yours.

6. But this simple *possession* of the right feelings and principles is not enough. That is, though it will alone accomplish a great deal, it will not alone effect all that

may be effected. You must distinctly *express* good sentiments in their hearing, as well as exemplify them in your conduct. In the school room, on the Sabbath, by the fireside, in your walks, take occasion to *express* what is right. I do not mean here to *prove* it, or explain it, or illustrate it,—I mean, to *express* it. Clothe it in language. Give truth utterance. There is more in this than mankind generally suppose. In many cases, when an argument on a moral subject is successfully presented to a popular audience, the logical force of the argument is not the secret of the effect. The work is done by the various enunciations of the proposition directly or indirectly contained in the train of reasoning,—enunciations which produce their effect as simple expressions of the truth. There is something in man which enables him to seize, as it were, by direct *prehension*, what is true, and right, and proper, when it is distinctly presented to him. He sees its moral fitness, by a sort of direct moral vision;—he has an appetite for it, as for food, which is only to be presented, in order to be received.

This is specially true of children, for in them, the powers of reasoning are not developed, and consequently the susceptibility of being influenced by reasoning, is smaller in proportion, than with the mature.

For example, you are walking with a little child, on a pleasant morning in the last of February, on the crust of the snow, and some little snow birds hop along before you, picking the seeds from the stems of the herbage which the wintry storms have not entirely covered. Now the soundest and most intelligent argument you can offer the child in favor of kindness to animals, would not have half as much power over it, as some such a soliloquy as this.

"Oh, see that little bird. Shall I throw my cane at him? Oh, no indeed! it would hurt him very much, or if it did not hit him, it would frighten him very much. I am sure I would not hurt that little bird. He is picking up the

seeds. I am glad he can find those little seeds. They taste very sweet to him, I suppose. I wish I had some crumbs of bread to give him. Do you thing he is cold? No, he is all covered with warm feathers; I do not think he is cold. Only his feet are not covered with feathers. I hope they are not cold."

Or if your companion is a boy of ten or twelve years of age, you may speak in a different manner, while still you utter nothing but a simple *expression* of your kindness and interest, and you will by it awaken kindness and interest in him. You say perhaps,

"See that snow bird. Stop, do not let us frighten him. Poor little thing! I should think he would find it hard work to get a living in these fields of snow. He is picking the seeds out of the tops of last year's plants. Let him have all he can find. There is a fine large weed by the side of that rock, I wish he could see it. We will move around this way, and then perhaps he will hop towards the rock. There he goes. He has found it; now stop and see him feast himself."

Suppose, now, on the other hand, you say,

"Stop, there 's a snow bird; stand back a minute and see how quick I will knock him down with my cane. If I once hit him, I will warrant he will never hop again."

Now these are all mere expressions of your own feeling, and in nine cases out of ten, the child who should listen to them, would find his heart gliding spontaneously into the same state with your own, whether it were that of kindness or cruelty. This mere utterance of the sentiment or feeling of your heart, would, except where some peculiar counteracting causes prevent it, awaken the like in him. Hence, be always ready not only to exhibit in your conduct the influence of right principle, but to express that principle, in language. Many persons imagine that unless they explain, or illustrate, or prove the truth, they can have nothing to say. But they mistake; it is the

simple *expression* of it, pleasantly and clearly, in a thousand various ways, and on a thousand different occasions, which will do more than either explanation, illustration, or proof.

7. But, still, though the former is what produces comparatively the greatest effect, the latter must receive attention too. Correct moral principle must not only be exhibited in your conduct and expressed in your conversation; it is also of the utmost importance that it should be, from time to time, formally illustrated and proved. The admission of moral principle to the minds of the young, and the formation of right habits of feeling, may perhaps be most easily received at first, by means of these moral sympathies; but it is only in the calm and intelligent conviction of the reason, that rectitude can have any firm and lasting foundation for its throne. If your habitual conduct does not exhibit, and your conversation express right principles, you can never bring your children to adopt them by any arguments for their truth; but if your habitual conduct and conversation is right, formal and logical instruction is necessary to secure permanently, the conquests which these influences will certainly make.

8. One more practical direction remains. It does not arise very directly from the general views advanced in this chapter, and has in fact, no special connection with them. It relates also more particularly to the duty of parents; but it is so fundamentally important that it ought to be appended here. It is, keep children as much as possible by themselves,—away from evil influences,—separate,—alone. Keep them from bad company, is very common advice. We may go much farther, and almost say, keep them from *company*, good or bad. Of course, this is to be understood with proper limits and restrictions; for to a certain extent, associating with others is of high advantage to them, both intellectually and morally. But this extent is almost universally far exceeded, and it will be generally found that the

most virtuous and the most intellectual, are those who have been brought up most by themselves and alone.

In fact, all history and experience shows, and it is rather a dark sign in respect to poor human nature, that the mutual influence of man upon man, is an influence of deterioration and corruption. Where men congregate in masses, there depravity thrives, and they can keep near to innocence only by being remote from one another. Thus densely populated cities, are always most immoral: an army, a ship, a factory, a crowded prison, and great gangs of laborers working in common, always exhibit peculiar tendencies to vice. So with the young. Boys learn more evil than good of their playmates at school; a college student who is regular, quiet and docile at home, in his vacations, is often wild, dissipated, idle and insubordinate in term time at college; and how often has the mother found that either one of two troublesome children, seem subdued and softened and dutiful, when the other is away. It seems as if human nature can be safe only in a state of segregation; in a mass, it runs at once to corruption and ruin.

So far then, as promiscuous intercommunication among the children of a town or a neighborhood is impeded, so far, within proper limits and restrictions, will the moral welfare of the whole be advanced. Few companions and fewer intimacies, and many hours of solitary occupation and enjoyment, will lead to the development of the highest intellectual and moral traits of character; in fact, *his* mental resources may be considered as entirely unknown and unexplored, who cannot spend his best and happiest hours alone.

It is often said that the young must be exposed to the temptations and bad influences of the world, in order to know what they are, by experience, and learn how to resist them. "They must be exposed to them," say these advocates of early temptation, "at some time or

other, and they may as well begin in season, so as to get the mastery over them the sooner." But this is not so. The exposure, if avoided in youth, is avoided principally for ever. A virtuous man in any honest pursuit of life comes very little into contact or connection with vice. He sees and hears more or less of it, it is true, every day, but his virtuous habits and associates and principles are such, that it is kept, as it were, at a sort of moral distance. It does not possess that power of contamination, which a corrupt school boy exercises over his comparatively innocent companion. A vast proportion of the vicious and immoral are made so before they are of age, and accordingly, he who goes on safely through the years of his minority, will generally go safely for the rest of the way.

The principles which we have been inculcating in this chapter, may, then, in conclusion, be summed up thus,

Children are eager to exercise continually their opening faculties, and to learn all they can about the world into which they are ushered. Those who aid and sympathize with them in these, their childlike feelings, they will love, and their principles and conduct they will adopt and imitate.

This being so, we have, by rendering them this aid and sympathy, an easy way of gaining over them a powerful ascendency. This once gained, we must exemplify in our conduct, and express in our daily conversation, and enforce by formal instructions, the principles which we wish them to imbibe, and they will readily imbibe them. Then, to make our work sure, we must shelter their tender minds from those rude blasts of moral exposure, which howl every where in this wilderness of sin. Any Christian who will act faithfully on these principles, towards the children who are within his reach, will probably save many of them from vice and misery, and he will certainly elevate the temporal virtue and happiness of them all. And if he acts in these duties as the humble, but devoted follower of Jesus

Christ,—sincere, unaffected, honest, childlike himself,—there are no labors in which he can engage, for which he may with greater confidence invoke the interposition of the Holy Spirit, to bless them to the salvation of *souls*.

CHAPTER X.

INSTRUCTION.

"Apt to teach, patient."

It might perhaps have been expected by the reader, that the subject of religious instruction would have formed a subordinate topic of the last chapter, but it is so extensive and important in its bearings, that it seemed better to give it a more full discussion, and to confine that chapter simply to the character of early childhood, and to the mode of gaining an ascendency over it. Besides, it is not merely to the young, that the principles to be elucidated now, will apply. It is the whole question, of approaching the human intellect with religious truth, that we shall here consider, whether the subjects be old or young,—a class in the Sabbath school, or a circle of children around the fireside, on a winter evening, or a younger sister listening to the conversation of an older one, while walking in the fields;—and even the pastor will find these principles and methods, such as in spirit guide him in his course of instruction to the adult congregation, which he leads forward from week to week, in religious knowledge.

The following propositions exhibit the view which we shall take of the subject in this chapter.

1. Our success depends upon the fulness and force with which the details of truth and duty are presented, and not

upon the scientific accuracy with which they are condensed into systems of theology.

2. The bible must be resorted to as the great storehouse of moral and religious truth.

3. The field of observation and experience must be explored, for the means of applying and enforcing it.

4. Its hold upon the soul is to be secured mainly by wakening up a testimony in its favor from within.

5. Attempts to remove error by argument and personal controversy, are almost always in vain.

These propositions we proceed to consider in their order

1. Our success depends upon the fulness and force with which the details of truth and duty are presented, and not upon the scientific accuracy with which they are condensed into systems of theology.

We are in the first place struck, when we look at this subject, at a very remarkable difference between the mode which God has taken to instruct mankind in religious truth and duty,—and that which, in modern times, we almost spontaneously fall upon. His mode and order of instruction, are totally different from ours: I mean are totally different in one respect. He exhibits the principles of truth and duty, one by one, as they occur in connection with the ordinary incidents and events of life. We give them in the order of a well digested and logical system, in fact, we may almost say that we teach the system, rather than the truths themselves, by whose arrangement the system is constituted. God's first lesson to the human race was the first five books of Moses;—the simple story of the Patriarchs, and of the children of Israel; and the institu-

tion of the moral and ceremonial law. *Our* first lesson would very likely have been an abridged, systematized, severe treatise, on the science of moral and religious philosophy. He simply tells the story of Cain and Abel. We, perhaps, should have given a disquisition on the nature of murder; *proved* that human life is sacred, and analyzed malice. He narrates the history of Abraham, perhaps not using the word faith, and certainly not making a single remark concerning its nature, from one end of the story to the other. We discuss the theory of faith, separate its essence,—point out all the distinctions in its varieties,—some real, others imaginary. Religious duty, as he presents it, is a living and acting reality, moving about among men, developing its character by its conduct. In our hands, it lies upon a table, as some writer has justly said, and we are demonstrating, by means of the scalpel and forceps, its inward structure. The dissection is most ingenious and skilful, and the demonstration, though sometimes lost in minute details, is still very scientific and complete; but then the poor subject is often murdered and mutilated under the operation.

And yet we ought scarcely to say that, for we do not mean to condemn altogether the tendency to analysis and system-making, so prevalent in modern days. Times have changed, the human mind has altered, not, indeed, in its native characteristics, but in its habits and modes of thought,—and instruction now has somewhat different objects, and must pursue somewhat different means, when addressed to individual infancy, by one of us, from those adopted, when, three thousand years ago, it was addressed by Jehovah to the infancy of the human race. We do not, therefore, compare the two methods, in order to condemn, altogether, ours. We wish to look at both, for we may learn a good deal from either; and especially as it is undoubtedly true; that in our efforts with the young, and, in fact, with the mass of mankind, it will be best for us to in-

cline strongly to the example, which God has set us in his own communications.

But a word or two more, before we proceed, in respect to the nature of the difference, above referred to. We can illustrate it by describing the modes, by which two individuals may pursue the study of botany. One takes books of scientific arrangement, and begins with classes, and orders, and genera, and looks upon the whole vegetable kingdom as a scientific system. He goes into the field to collect specimens, simply as partial illustrations of the great artificial edifice, which the labors of the botanist have gradually formed. The system, the arrangement, the classification, is all in all to him,—the observed facts are only subsidiary and illustrative. It was not so with the botanists themselves, when they formed the system. The observed facts were the foremost with them, and stood out prominent in their conceptions of the vegetable world. The system, the arrangement came last, and was subsidiary and illustrative in respect to the facts. But our student has reversed this process. He begins where the botanist ends, and works back to where they began. Because he is studying their works, he imagines that he is treading in their footsteps. And so he is, but he is retracing them. The track of his foot is reversed upon theirs all the way. He looks in the opposite direction; he begins where they ended, though he seldom gets to where they began.

Our other pupil now takes a different course. He goes out into the field looking for plants, and he first sees, we will suppose, along under the fences and by the road-side, a profusion of thistles. He examines the structure of this individual plant, notices the leaf, the flower, the seed. By means of books, or through his teacher, he learns to what degree the plant is extended over the earth, that is, what portion of the earth it occupies;—whether it is spreading still, and if so, where and how: whether it is useful for any purposes,—or injurious; and what methods are in use by

The thistle. The rose.

agriculturists for its extermination. So he examines minutely its structure; its leaves, its flower, its seed,—and studies its habits. In a word, he becomes thoroughly acquainted with this one plant, a plant that is all around him, which he sees every day, and is very often made, in his hearing, a subject of remark or conversation. While he has been doing this, the pupil, who began at the other end, has, perhaps, nearly finished committing to memory the names of the Linnæan classes.

Our second pupil, however, having mastered the thistle, takes next, perhaps, the rose, or some other common plant, and after having studied it thoroughly in its individuality, as he did the thistle, the teacher calls his attention to the points of resemblance, in respect to structure, which it may bear to the thistle. *Here* now is his beginning of system and arrangement. Connecting together by observed similarities, and discriminating by observed differences, the objects with which, individually, he has become fully acquainted. This is beginning at the right end. This is really following on in the footsteps of the botanists, his masters. As he proceeds, he arranges and classifies his knowledge, just as fast as he acquires it. System is thus the handmaid and preserver of knowledge, as she ought to be, and not the mere substitute for it. He builds up in his own mind, the edifice of scientific system, just as fast as the substantial materials are furnished him; and comes out at the end, as the great masters did before him, with that magnificent temple of science, which, like all other substantial edifices, must be built from bottom to top, and not from top to bottom.

To make this case clear and distinct, I have represented the two modes, each pure in its kind,—the extreme cases on the two plans. In point of fact, however, there is ordinarily some mixture of the two, or rather an adoption in general of the one course, with some tendency towards the other. In fact, intelligent teachers who may read this chap-

ter, will probably perceive that the principle of the latter mode, though really most philosophical in its nature, ought not, for the common purposes of instruction, to be pressed too far. The results arrived at by the original investigators of the science, may aid the pupil very much, in his efforts to follow them: and the system and the principles of arrangement might very advantageously be explained in general, and carried along with him, as he goes on. Many teachers have erred in carrying the principle, which I have been endeavoring to illustrate, to extremes: in the mathematics, for example, and in the natural sciences. They have thus, sometimes pressed the plan of making the pupils pursue this natural course of induction, so far, as to deprive them of the aid of those who have preceded them. In fact, carrying out the principle to its full extent, would almost make every pupil an independent investigator and discoverer,—whereas a life would not suffice for the most common attainments, in any one science, in this way. The true principle seems to be, to lead the pupil over the ground in the natural track, acquiring knowledge first in detail, and arranging and classifying it, as he proceeds. The worth and utility of what he learns, will depend upon the fulness, and freshness, and vitality of his individual acquisitions, and scientific system should be gradually developed as the apartments of it can be occupied. The building is beautiful in itself, it is true, but it is valuable, chiefly as a means of securing and preserving from derangement and loss, the valuables it contains.

And now to apply these considerations to the subject before us. Three thousand years ago, Jehovah began to communicate by slow and simple steps, moral and religious truth, and instruction in moral and religious duty, to man. He brought forward these truths, not in the order of scientific system, but in that of commonness,—everyday importance,—moral proximity. It is the thistle first, and then the rose. These revelations were slowly continued

The theologians. Province and value of theological science.

for many centuries. The profoundest intellects, and the purest moral sensibilities, have been, in all ages of the world, employed upon these truths,—examining and arranging them, and observing and noting the points of resemblance or of diversity. They have examined them synthetically and analytically; they have made nice distinctions, dissecting out truth into all its ramifications, and they have explored things most diverse and distinct in appearance, and traced them to a common origin. These intellectual processes have been going on for ages, and we have now before us, as the result, the same truth, indeed, which the prophets and the apostles taught, but arranged, and classified, and formed into a scientific system.

Let now the reader not suppose that we mean to condemn this. Not at all. If any thing is plain, it is that God intended that the minds of men should exercise themselves strongly and continually upon what he has revealed. The field of moral and religious truth, as his Word and the universal dictates of conscience lay it open, affords the finest scope for the exercise of the highest human powers; and the nature of the case, and especially the very condition in which the close of his revelation has left the whole ground, shows plainly that he intended that we should explore and cultivate it. The object of these remarks is not at all to condemn theological science, but only to point out the facts in the case, with reference to their influence upon the course we ought to pursue, in endeavoring to initiate the young in religious knowledge. That great mass of religious and moral truth, which the bible and the human conscience bring before the mind, in slow detail and minute applications, has been by the patient theological labor and acumen of many centuries, at last elaborated into scientific systems. Now we must not, in guiding the young, commence with the science and the system, and work back to the elements; we must go round back to the beginning, and give them truth and explain to them duty, substantially

in the order and manner in which God has done it, and come to the science and the system at last. We shall explain more particularly, how this is to be done, as we proceed. But this general view of the subject, if properly appreciated, will at once throw open a very wide field of religious instruction, and make the work comparatively easy. Persons very often feel timid and constrained, in their efforts at instruction in the bible class, or Sabbath school, or even with their own children at home, because they feel that their own attainments are not of a sufficiently logical and systematic character. They know vastly more than their pupils, they admit, but they are not scholars enough to teach what they know. Their own education has not been regular and systematic enough, they imagine. That is, they have not gone through the whole theological course, and come out with that complete system of truth, by which, as by a frame work, they imagine that all subordinate teaching should be regulated. But this is not the work to be done. Your simple business is to look at once around you, and take any thing that is moral or religious truth, and explain, and expand, and exhibit it in its simplicity, and in its individuality, to the minds of the young. It is no matter whether your knowledge exists in the form of systematized theology or not. In either case, your business is to bring before your pupils the elements, as individual elements, in all their freshness and particularity and their endless application to the circumstances and wants of common life. The science which you feel the need of, though it would be of immense value to you, as a means of giving clearness to your conceptions, and vigor and confidence to all your mental operations, is not, after all, what you want to present, as such to the mind of the child. Teach them all the details of truth and duty, and in any order. Study and present the principles of piety in their ordinary applications to the circumstances of life. Dwell on what is obvious, important, and of every day utility, rather than on

what is metaphysical, or far fetched, or refined, and thus store the minds of your pupils with the materials which their riper studies may classify and arrange. This is the wisest course for them, whether they form a bible class of youth, or a crowded congregation of adults, or a little circle of children at the fireside.

2. The Bible must be resorted to, as the great storehouse of moral and religious truth.

The doctrinal and preceptive portions of the Bible, deserve a prominent place, undoubtedly, as the source from which religious instruction is to be drawn, but perhaps they ought not to occupy a share of attention so nearly exclusive, as they often do. The narratives of the Old Testament, and of the New, are full of materials, if read and explained with a view to bringing out their moral expression. The Bible may be studied, in fact, with many totally different objects and aims, each of which is valuable in its place. We may carry a class rapidly over the books of Kings and Chronicles, for example, with a view to obtaining a general knowledge of their literary contents; and by collating them, and comparing passage with passage, reduce to system, and to a clear, connected view, their chronological and historical details. This now would be totally different from taking up in detail the several narratives which these books contain, for the purpose of bringing out to view, the moral lessons which each one was intended to teach. Now it is this latter mode, that I refer to here. The Scriptures are an inexhaustible storehouse, from which moral truth may be drawn, in every form of its development, and in all the innumerable varieties of its application.

Let us take a case at random, to illustrate how full the narratives of the Scriptures are of moral truth, which needs only to be brought out to view, in order strongly to interest and to benefit the young. We will take Korah's mutiny,

Korah's mutiny.	The parties.	Their designs.

for example. We select this case, because it is one of those narratives, which, on account of the terrible termination of the case, is generally somewhat known to children, and, therefore, it is the more suitable to our purpose, of showing how much may be brought out to view, by a little attention, which otherwise would be passed by unnoticed and unknown.

The teacher in his class, or the parent at his fireside, or even the minister in his pulpit, opens the subject with the first verse of the passage, thus;

"Now Korah, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown."

Now, in order to have the moral bearings of the narrative clearly appreciated, the first thing is to consider distinctly the several parties in the transaction;—Korah, one of the *Levites*, and Dathan and Abiram, and On, of the *people*, with their respective adherents. In all such cases, we must observe, first, who are the persons brought upon the stage of action, and what their situations and characters are, so as to appreciate their words and actions, and to observe whether they are in keeping with their respective circumstances. In order to do this, in this case, we must recall to mind the arrangement which God had made with the Israelites in the wilderness. Aaron was the priest, holding the highest ecclesiastical dignity. The family of Levi came next, and the duties connected with all the ordinary services of worship devolved upon them. The people generally were of course devoted to other occupations. If the pupils now distinctly conceive of the vast assembly encamping in the wilderness, Moses, the military commander, Aaron holding the supreme sacerdotal dignity, and the Levite Korah, uniting with the princes Dathan,

Abiram and On, in a mutiny, they will be prepared to understand what follows.

"And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

Now, how much of human nature is to be seen in this address, when we come to examine it. The real feeling in the mind of the speaker was, "I cannot bear to be second. I mean to stand as high in official dignity as Aaron." Ambition, pride, a spirit of unsubmission to God, was the stimulus. But how is the direct expression of it withheld, or rather covered up and concealed, under an accusation against Moses and Aaron, and a pretended vindication of the rights of the mass of the people, the universal pretext of the spirit of disorganization and rebellion, in every age "You take too much upon you;"—when they were themselves going to take, and that by usurpation, the very same thing. And, "all the congregation are holy." They did not mean morally pure, by this, but ceremonially competent in the eye of God, to offer worship for themselves. This was said just as similar things are said now, to gain partisans. The aspiring demagogue, in order to carry on his schemes, always flatters the great mass which he wishes to move, telling them that they deserve an equality with the government, which he wishes them to help him overthrow.

Observe, now, an apparently undesigned, but very interesting coincidence which testifies strongly to the truth and faithfulness of the narrative. Who was the speaker in this case? There were two parties in the rebellion, Korah, the Levite, on the one hand, and Dathan, Abiram and On from the people, on the other. Now which was the speaker in this case? The narrative does not tell us directly, but the speech itself betrays the feelings of the Levite. "Ye take too much upon you, for all the people are holy;" referring evidently to the ecclesiastical aspects of the

arrangement they opposed. The reply of Moses corresponds. He spake unto *Korah* and all *his* company; and below, we find that the *lay* leaders, as we may perhaps call them, were not present.

How appropriate, now, is the reply of Moses to Korah and his adherents,—how exactly what it ought to be in such a case, to set in a clear light their ingratitude and wickedness. After proposing a test by which he was on the morrow to submit the question to the decision of God himself, he reminds them of the high station to which they had been assigned, and of the ingratitude and criminal ambition of aspiring to a higher one.

"Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi with thee; and seek ye the priesthood also?"

His reply thus, is not at all a reply to what Korah had *said*. Moses disregards his speech entirely, and comes at once to his feelings,—to the real source of the difficulty, in the pride and ambition in his heart.

Then he sent to call Dathan and Abiram. They would not come, but sent a disrespectful message,—one, however, entirely different, in respect to the grounds of the complaint, from the speech of Korah, and in exact keeping with the characters of the men. Korah's pretence was the natural one coming from an ambitious priest. That of Dathan and Abiram was just as natural from a discontented and rebellious people.

"Is it a small thing that thou has brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

We will not go on any farther with the narrative. But the following questions, most of which, even the youngest

child, who had once read and appreciated the story, would readily answer, shows how much moral truth, such a narrative, when fully appreciated, may be the means of developing in the mind.

What did the sin of these men chiefly consist in,—the feelings, or the words, or the actions?

Did Korah commit any wicked act? Did Dathan and Abiram?

Did they not all commit sin in feeling?

What is the name for the kind of feelings they had? A rebellious spirit.

Do children ever feel a rebellious spirit? Against whom?

Do they ever feel the rebellious spirit when they do not manifest it in actions? When they do not express it in words?

What reasons are there that prevent their expressing or acting it, when they have the feeling?

Can a rebellious spirit be expressed by looks as well as by actions? Do children ever express it so? By what sort of looks?

Is the rebellious spirit a pleasant or a painful feeling? Were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram happy probably, while rebelling? Would they have been happy if they had succeeded in what they wanted to do?

The proposing of questions like these, might be the best way of bringing out the truth contained in the narrative, or suggested by it, if the pupils are children, whether they are gathered in numbers around their teacher at the Sabbath school, or sit upon their father's knees, to look over, while he reads the story from the great family bible, at the chimney corner. If the audience is mature, the same points would be brought to view,—the same moral analysis of the story, though the results would receive an expression in language in a somewhat different manner. The ques-

tions we have given above, have by no means exhausted the subject. There are many other moral instructions to be deduced from the narrative. Moses, for example, in verse 11, considers the rebellion as against the Lord. This naturally leads the mind to the consideration, that Moses and Aaron, being appointed by God, were clothed with his authority, and that opposition against them was rebellion against Him. This, properly illustrated and explained, will set in a very striking light before children, why a rebellious spirit against their parents, even if shown only by looks, or not expressed outwardly at all, is a sin, not merely against their parents, but against God. Then there is the subject of punishment, too; the evil and the danger resulting from such conduct making punishment of it necessary, and the great guilt of it, making a severe punishment of it just; and so with a great many other subjects of inquiry and reflection, so numerous and full, that the space allotted to this whole chapter would scarcely afford room for a brief enumeration of them.

It is not that such a passage directly teaches all these truths, or that they can be logically deduced from them,—nor that they merely suggest them as principles to be proved. The narrative calls up the principles to the mind, as principles intuitively perceived to be true. They are to be expressed by the voice of the teacher, knowing that the expression of them will be re-echoed and confirmed to the pupil, by a voice within. There are, indeed, moral and religious truths which must be proved, but we do not speak of them here. We speak now, of a thousand principles of right and wrong, that are brought to view in the narratives of the Scriptures, and which need no proof. Apprehension of them is conviction. Some are found by the mind in the narrative, others, the narrative draws forth out of the mind. So that in some respects, the story is the storehouse which the mind explores for moral treasures; in others, the storehouse is the mind, and the book the instrument of admission.

Two kinds of interest in a story.

We have taken this single case, and dwelt upon it, to show how minutely and fully, the individual passages of Scripture should be explored as mines of moral and religious truth. I need not say that the whole bible, examined thus, would furnish an inexhaustible store.

All persons, both old and young, will take a far greater interest in the moral aspects and bearings of the Scripture histories, than they do in the mere incidents of the narrative; or rather the incidents and the narrative itself will excite interest just in proportion as the moral meaning is seen through them. Teachers of the young often overlook this,—they bring Scripture narrative before their pupils, simply as a history of occurrences, and a great portion of the force, and point and beauty lying beneath the surface, is not seen.

For example, take the story of Job. We may present it in two totally different ways, to a class of little children. Suppose, for the first experiment, we gather the little pupils around us, and read them the account of Job's prosperity, accompanying it with familiar explanations. We tell them how many sheep, and oxen, and camels he had, and help them to picture to their minds some idea of his mode of life, and of the appearance of his vast herds, and numerous household. They are highly interested. Their curiosity, and imagination, and wonder are strongly excited. Then you read to them, the account of his successive losses. You describe the incursions of the enemy, and the effects of the lightning, and bring home clearly to the minds of the pupils, the terrific scenes alluded to in the description. The children are all intensely interested in it, as in a dreadful tragedy. At the close, perhaps, you say that Job did not repine against God, notwithstanding all these calamities;—that he was patient and submissive, and we ought all to follow his example.

Thus the interest awakened in the minds of the children, is an interest in the story, as a narration of wonderful

incidents. The moral bearing of it, is but slightly alluded to, and the whole impression made by it, is upon the imagination, and not upon the heart.

We turn now to the opposite course, viz. passing lightly over the incidents, and bringing out fully to view, the moral meaning of the story. With the same, or a similar little auditory around you, you begin by telling them of Job's vast possessions, in general terms, and then saying that God determined to take them all away, in order to try him, and see whether he would bear it submissively and patiently.

"Do you know what submissively and patiently, means?"

"Yes, sir." "No, sir."

"Why, suppose one of you should have a beautiful picture book, and when you were sitting down by the fire, to read it, your mother should say, 'Come, I must put that book away now; I want you to go to bed;' what do you think you should do or say?"

A pause.

"Perhaps you do not know exactly what you would do or say, but you may tell me what a bad child might do or say, in such a case. Any one may tell me."

"He might begin to cry."—"He might say, 'I want to sit up a little longer, very much.'" "He might say, 'I wont.'"

"Yes, and a boy who was patient and submissive, would shut up the book pleasantly, and bring it to his mother, and say, 'Very well.' Now, do you all understand what patient and submissive means?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then we will go on with the story of Job. God took away all his property, to try him, and see whether he would be patient and submissive, or not. He wanted to see what he would say."

Then read and explain the accounts of the calamities by which Job was reduced to poverty and wretchedness, in

such a way as to awaken their sympathy for him, and their curiosity in respect to its effect upon his mind.

"Thus," you say in conclusion, "all his flocks and herds were carried away, and his children were killed, and his servants taken captive or destroyed,"—

"All excepting the men who escaped to tell him."

"Yes, they were saved, it is true. Now, what do you think Job said?—do you know?"

"No, sir."

"It was something very remarkable. It showed at once, whether he was patient and submissive, or not. It was something *very* remarkable, indeed. People have repeated it a great many times since, when they have lost something which they valued very much. It was this,

"'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

A pause.

"It was just as if the child whose mother had taken away his beautiful book, should say, as he was going up stairs with the candle in his hand; 'My mother gave me the book, and my mother has taken it away, I will not complain of my mother.'—Should you not think that would be a patient and submissive boy?"

Now, in this case, it is plain that the great effort has been to bring out the moral expression of the story, so that children can see and appreciate it. But we have not detailed these two modes of explaining the same story, to condemn the former; but only to show how completely distinct in its nature, an interest in the moral bearing of a narrative, is from an interest in the incidents, considered simply as a story. Both these kinds of interest ought to be awakened; but the latter, especially, by all means. For it is the latter alone, which can give to the study of the bible, any influence on the affections of the soul.

Thus the bible is the great magazine to be explored.

And it is to be explored in this way, so as to bring out to view the moral and religious truth taught in every page of it. Excite in your pupils as strong a dramatic interest in the narrative as you can, but let all this interest be concentrated upon the moral principles, of which the narrative is intended to be an expression.

3. The field of observation and experience is to be explored for the means of enforcing and applying religious truth in the most effectual manner.

The habit of observing and analyzing human conduct and character, and reflecting upon it, is absolutely necessary to enable us to command the avenues to the heart. We must be in the habit of noting the most common occurrences, and of tracing them back to the springs of action from which they rise. Observe the moral truths which they will illustrate, or the moral principles they exemplify, and reflect upon them in this light, in your hours of meditation. There is a vast diversity in different minds in this respect, produced by habit or by different degrees of intellectual culture. One, in looking upon the scenes of daily life which are exhibited before him, perceives only what comes to the eye or the ear. Another, traces back the most common occurrences to their origin; and the exercise, which was, perhaps, at first, a study, becomes ere long, a habit, and at length the whole panorama of life seems, to such a mind, alive with the expression of those moral principles and laws of which it is, in fact, the acting out, though not seen to be so by the common observer. The ordinary exhibitions of human action, though opaque, and tame, and spiritless to others, are bright and transparent to him. He sees a spiritual world through the external one, and the spectacle which thus exhibits itself all around him, is clothed thus with a double interest and splendor.

Effect of a habit of observation.

This habit once formed, every thing becomes expressive, to the mind that has formed it. The attitude and manner of a man says something of his character. A conversation in a stage coach, on any ordinary topic, brings to the view of the observer, the operation of many principles of human nature,—and the actions of a group of children at play, will reveal to him their respective dispositions, or exhibit in interesting lights, the various propensities of childhood; while another, looking upon the same scene, would see nothing in it, but unmeaning frolicksomeness and confusion.

In the same manner, the events, and incidents, and individual history which exhibit themselves in our progress through life, as well as the various phases which human conduct presents to us from day to day, ought to be studied with reference to the moral principles which lie at the foundation of them. All human character and conduct is but the acting out of inward principle, and the events and occurrences of life are determined by a combination of movements in the moral and intellectual world, from which they derive all their interest to us, as rational beings. It is in the development of these, that we should be most interested. It is the common, and the universal too, not the extraordinary, which should interest us most strongly. A vulgar eye stares at the strange, the monstrous, the wonderful. A trunk of a tree, twisted into the rude resemblance of a man, pleases it more than if it grows into its own proper form, and exhibits its own proper expression: and it loves the gaudy deformities of excessive cultivation, rather than the simple elegance of the natural flower. Carrying the same principle into its observations upon human life, it sees nothing to interest it in the beautiful operations of ordinary cause and effect,—the healthful, quiet, natural expression with which all the movements of society beam. It is only the extraordinary development, the complicated plot, the catastrophe, the escape, the wonderful,

Refined and vulgar taste.

the horrible, which can arrest its attention;—the true philosopher derives a far higher pleasure, in reading the meaning of every thing around him. The latter is pleased with discerning, in common events, the operation of an Universal Cause; and in an accidental interruption, he is interested chiefly in observing the new influence, whose intervention produced it. The other is pleased only with accidents, and with them, only, because they are strange. The less he understands them, the greater his delight, for the very essence of his delight is surprise and wonder.

Now do not study the varied scene of life, which exhibits itself around you, in this way. Make it your aim, not merely to see what is visible to the eye, but to read its hidden meaning, and take pleasure, not in novelty and strangeness, but in the clearness with which you understand and appreciate every common phenomenon. Be intimately conversant thus with a moral and spiritual world, to which the external one around you will be the medium of access. He who does this, will find his mind filled with a thousand recollections and associations that, by means of a power which is neither imagination or memory, but something between, will furnish him with illustrations of all which he wishes to teach;—illustrations true in spirit, though imaginary in form.

The study of man on these principles, will give the Christian who pursues it, immense facilities for instructing and interesting his pupils in religious truth. For he will, by such means, greatly extend his knowledge of this truth, in all its thousand ramifications, and in its endless connections with the circumstances of life; and then this complete familiarity with the field, will give him an independent and original freedom of hand in the discussion and illustration of truth, which nothing else can supply. Thoroughly furnished thus with knowledge of the Scriptures, considered as a great storehouse of moral truth, and with knowledge of man, his feelings, his habits, his principles of

action, and the thousand changing hues which human character assumes, he may go freely and boldly forward, and will be prepared to labor in this field with the greatest success. This study of the bible, will give him the truth which he is to present, and his study of man will open to him the avenues by which he is to present it.

4. The admission of moral truth to the soul, is to be secured mainly by means of a testimony awakened in its favor from within.

In several instances in the course of this work, we have had occasion to refer to the readiness with which moral and religious truth is received by the human mind, when properly presented to it. It seems to carry its evidence within itself, or rather, it finds faculties in the human soul, so well qualified to judge almost instinctively of its claims, and so predisposed to admit them, that the single presentation of it, seems generally to secure its admission. There is a sort of moral intuition, by which moral beauty and excellence are apprehended, and moral truth received.

That this should be so, follows from the very nature of moral truth. It does not consist of a series of propositions, constructed with subject, predicate and copula, and following one another in order, like the successive theorems of the science of Astronomy. In fact, this way of considering the mathematical sciences is altogether artificial, and the necessity of it results from the feebleness of our intellectual powers. To a mind that could look upon the whole planetary system, with powers sufficient really to comprehend the mathematical bearings and relations of the whole, the tendencies, the movements, the variations, the limits, —the laws, the forces, their combination, or opposition, or results, would appear as one magnificent and harmonious whole, and would be seen by the intellectual eye directly and together. Those few detached and separate principles

which mathematicians have drawn out, and expressed as laws, would be combined in the view with those thousand others with which they are in reality blended, and the mind would survey the whole complicated system,—(we do not mean the system of visible motions, but of mathematical laws,)—as the eye would take in an extended landscape spread out before it. Thus the vast and complicated results, which we have to deduce one by one, by means of our laborious computation, would be directly perceived, and would be looked upon by the mind as one great and connected reality, and not as a few detached and artificial propositions. Our intellectual vision is not strong enough thus to grasp the higher sciences; and so we grope our way from one detached and isolated principle expressed in formal language, to another, wherever we can find the shortest and simplest steps; like a blind man in a palace, groping along by the aid of chairs and banisters, and knowing nothing certainly, excepting the few separate objects he has touched; which, few and scattered as they are, prove to him, from their position and character, that he is in the midst of a scene of magnificence and splendor which he can never fully realize.

It is so with all other sciences. The properties of a triangle are all involved in the very nature of the figure. If our minds could comprehend that nature as a whole, we should see all these properties as readily and directly as we now perceive that there must be three angles if there are three sides. Unable, however, thus to grasp the whole at a single view, we grope our way to a few detached and separate principles, by a toilsome, and slow, and cautious ratiocination. Reasoning, therefore, step by step, from premises to conclusion, is the resort of a limited mind when its higher powers fail, and its detached and limited results are but substitutes for more comprehensive knowledge. Still, the exercise of it may be, as indeed it is, an exhibition of the noblest and greatest efforts of the human

A difference between intellectual and moral science.

mind; as the highest effort of the sagacity of a blind man, may be exhibited, in the dexterity with which he makes his way in a crowded city, by his hearing and touch;—and yet, after all, hearing and touch, however highly cultivated, are, in such a case, but an imperfect substitute for vision.

Now, we must, in the intellectual sciences, with minds circumscribed as ours are, be content to penetrate the boundless field before us, only in a narrow path like this, passing on in it from step to step, by cautious ratiocination. And we can bring our pupil to any point which we have ourselves attained, only by leading him cautiously over all the previous steps by which we had attained it. But it is not so with moral truth. Each subordinate portion seems to bring with it its own testimony, and to stand independent of the rest. There are a thousand connections, it is true, by which all the parts are blended into one harmonious whole, but each carries its own evidence within itself, and needs only to be apprehended, in order to be believed.

This would be true without limitation or exception, were it not for the influence of passion and sin which produce moral blindness, and cut off the view of moral truth from the soul. The very way, however, by which these operate, in shutting any moral principles from the mind, illustrates what we have said; for they produce these effects, not by incapacitating the mind from following any trains of reasoning by which the principle might be sustained, but by rendering it insensible to its intrinsic excellence and beauty Our great work, therefore, is, as we have said often before, to *present* truth, rather than to *prove* it to man. We are to gain access for it around, or under, or over, or through the prejudices and sins which oppose its admission;—then we are to present it in its own intrinsic excellence and beauty, and exhibit it in its details and in its applications, confident that if it is perceived, it will commend itself, and be estab-

lished by its own intrinsic character, rather than by any train of ratiocination by which it may be shown to result logically from established premises.

This is true in regard to a great many cases, which might, at first, appear as exceptions. There is, for example, the evidence of the truth of Christianity. We are accustomed to see it presented in a well connected train of argument, which proceeds from what is admitted as premises, to the result finally arrived at as conclusion. But in point of fact, we shall generally find, that though such an argument may be constructed, it is not the force of it which generally determines the faith of Christians, nor does it even materially affect that faith. The true ground on which Christianity is received, where it is really received, is a perception of its moral features, by a mind spiritually sensible of them. It commends itself to the moral wants of the soul, and where these moral wants are felt, Christianity is received by a process much shorter than Lardner's. In other cases, Christianity is not really believed. The education or the habits of the individual may be such, that he does not choose to deny its truth, but he does not really receive it. The argument, at least, does not convince him. If, in any case, it seems to have some effect, it is mainly by its moral influence in bringing the claims of religion in their true character, fairly before the mind.

It is in accordance with this view of the subject, that the various illustrations with which this work and its predecessors abound, are given to the reader. They are offered, not as arguments, but simply as *aids to apprehension*, in cases where the thought, if apprehended, will commend itself. Facts *may be* sometimes stated as evidence; as for example, when a chemist informs us that he subjected silex to a certain degree of heat, and it was fused. If we believe his testimony, we learn, from his statement of the fact, that silex is fusible at the specified temperature. In such a case, every thing depends on the

authority of the observer, and this on the accuracy and faithfulness of his observations We know nothing about the subject, except what he informs us. There is no intrinsic evidence in the case; and all the value of the chemist's information, depends upon the fusion having actually taken place in that particular instance, and under the circumstances described. But an illustration of any moral principle, though in the form of a reported fact, is altogether different in its nature. Take, for instance, the story of the boys on the ice, to illustrate the nature and effects of sin and confession, in the first chapter of the Young Christian. Its object is not to prove that sin will burden the mind, and confession relieve it, from the result of the experiment in that one case. Its object is not to prove the truth, but only to make a clear exhibition of it. For its reception, we rely on a testimony in its favor in the mind of every reader. So that the appeal is not to the authority of experiment, but to the authority of every man's consciousness, in respect to the operations of moral causes upon the human mind. It follows, therefore, that while in the chemical example, we must have the most unquestionable evidence that the experiment was actually performed, and performed exactly as reported,—in the moral one, it is of no consequence whether it was or was not ever performed at all. An illustration of a moral principle or truth, intended only to exhibit something which is to prove itself when exhibited, if it is true to human nature, may be as well imaginary as real; for it is evidently of no consequence, whether the occurrence described, ever took place or not, provided that its only object is to bring before the mind, the elements or materials upon which the mind is afterwards left at liberty to judge.

Moral truth, may, indeed, sometimes be proved by the adduction of facts,—results of experiment. But this is a very slow and toilsome process. "Facts," it is said, by a

common proverb, "are stubborn things:" to this, it has been very properly replied, that they are the most pliant, flexible, uncertain things that the human intellect has to deal with. Even in the physical world, it is far more difficult than is ordinarily imagined, to establish any truth by a legitimate induction. Do the various positions of the moon, in her monthly revolution, affect the changes of the weather? To settle such a question by a series of observations, made with such accuracy, and perseverance, and care, as really to settle it, will require a vigilance and a labor, which those who are not accustomed to philosophical inquiries, would be slow to anticipate. But in the moral world, the difficulty is incomparably greater; and though it is very often the case, that writers attempt to prove the wisdom of plans, or the efficacy of measures for the promotion of piety, by an induction of facts, to prove their success on experiment,—yet these facts are seldom sufficient to establish the point according to the principles of philosophical induction.

It is pleasant to reflect how close at hand, God has placed all the moral and religious truth necessary for human salvation. If labored reasoning had been necessary to establish it, how many millions, even in a civilized and Christian land, must have lived and died in hopeless ignorance; but God has provided better for the wants and dangers of humanity. He has so adapted the constitution of the human mind to the immutable and eternal principles of right and wrong, that our great work is simply to *manifest them*, in order to have them received; and where they are rejected, it is sin, not intellectual incapacity, that causes their exclusion.

5. Attempts to remove error by argument or personal controversy, are almost always in vain.

Sometimes when we argue, we are not arguing with error at all. We aim directly at the establishment of the truth, and that without supposing in our hearer any tendency to error. As when, for example, one young man presents to another, in a walk, the evidence in favor of the immortality of the soul, which he may have collected; not as a means of combatting his errors, but of confirming and establishing his belief of the truth. Parents often thus argue with their children, and pastors with their people. They attempt to prove the truth, feeling all the time that their hearers go along with them easily, wishing to have it proved. It is obvious that there are few dangers or difficulties here. The speaker and hearers are agreed. They are travelling a road which they all wish to travel; the followers looking up to the leader as a guide. Under such circumstances, there must be some extraordinary clumsiness or infelicity, to create any difficulty by the way.

Again, in other cases, we argue not for the truth, but against error, our hearers, however, being, as before, unbiassed, and willing to be led wherever our arguments may carry them. Here there is a little greater danger than in the other case, for error is dangerous to meddle with in any way. First, there is danger that our mere statement of the error will introduce it; in accordance with the principle that we have often alluded to, in the course of this work, that statements have more influence generally upon the human mind than reasoning. An idea *presented*, will often enter and remain, bidding defiance to all the exorcisms of argument and appeal, by which the introducer of it in vain attempts to get it out again. Then, also, by the violence with which we assail an opinion and its advocates, we may create a sympathy in their favor, and lead our hearers to take their side;—on the principle which leads us often to take part with the absent and undefended, whether right or wrong. Thus, while we imagine that our hearers are admiring the havoc our intellectual cannon is

making in the battlements of the enemy, they are in fact, secretly stealing over to the aid of the fortress assailed. In these and similar ways, we may, while combatting error, enlist some of the feelings of human nature in its favor,—feelings stronger than allegiance to logic and reasoning. These dangers, however, serious as they are, we must not now dwell upon, but pass to a third case.

We sometimes argue directly with those holding erroneous opinions. This is what we intend by the phrase, "attempting to remove error by argument," placed at the head of this part of the chapter. Here lies the great difficulty and danger. The attempt to convince man of error is the most delicate and hazardous of all the modes of action of mind upon mind. By saying it is delicate, I do not mean that it is a *nice* operation. The forces are not small and weak, requiring nice attention and adjustment to develop them. They are, on the contrary, great and uncontrolable. There is the mighty power of truth, on one side, and the still mightier power of error, on the other. There is habit with its iron chain, and prejudice and passion, with their swift current, and pride with its strong walls, and falsehood and inconsistency like heaps of rubbish. These you have to overcome and remove. You have, indeed, on your side, the clear silent light of reason, and the voice of conscience,—powerful enough to conquer any thing else; but pride, and passion, and habit will conquer them.

When the speaker has a willing auditor, his work is easy; but when he has one to lead along in the way in which he does not wish to go, his work is all but hopeless. Established opinions are, indeed, sometimes changed,—but not often by reasoning. New associations,—the slow influence of altered circumstances,—the change effected in the whole character of the soul, by real conviction of sin,—these and similar causes, affecting the feelings more than the reasoning powers, often subdue pride, and break down obstinacy, and undermine long established errors. And so

does, sometimes, it must be acknowledged, the power of naked reasoning;—sometimes,—but yet seldom.

Still, there are many cases where argument helps and hastens the abandonment of error. Perhaps, however, it as often only confirms its dominion. And yet many persons, especially the young, are eager to engage in it. Experience generally gives us more sober expectations of success from it, but in early life we are always ready for the combat. By faithfully studying and understanding and adopting the following principles, our readers will avoid many of the dangers of such conflicts, and will somewhat increase the faint hopes of success.

(1.) Understand fully the position taken by the friend whose errors you wish to correct. You must, to do this, go to him as it were, and see with his eyes. Remember that error appears reasonable to all who embrace it. It is a fallacious reasonableness, I grant, but it appears real. Now you must see this fallacious reasonableness yourself, or you cannot understand the light in which the subject stands, in the mind you are endeavoring to reach. If, instead of this, we keep at a distance, and fulminate expressions of reprobation at a man's errors, and of astonishment at his inconsistency and wickedness in holding them, we may gratify our own censoriousness and spiritual pride, but can do him no good.

"Father," says a little child, sitting on his cricket by the fireside, on a winter evening: "Father, I see a light, a strange light out the window, over across the road."

"Nonsense, you silly child, there is no house across the road, and there can be no light there this time of night."

"But I certainly see one, father, a large bright light."

"No such thing," insists the father, "It cannot be so. There is nothing over there that can burn. I can see out of the window myself, and it is all a white field of snow."

This is one way of combatting error. The boy is silenced, not convinced; and were he not awed by parental authority, he would not even be silenced.

"Where?" says another father, in a similar case. And though from his own chair, he can see the field, across the road, he goes to the child, and putting his eye close to his son's, says, "Where?—let me see?"

"Ah, I see it:—well, now, walk slowly with me, up to the window."

Thus he leads the boy up and shows him the grounds of his illusion, in a reflection of the fire from a pane of glass.

Now, this is the proper way of correcting error. You must first see it, as the friend whose opinions you wish to correct, sees it. It has its specious appearances. There are positions, towards which it presents reasonable, though fallacious aspects. Now you can do your friend no good, you cannot sympathize with him, you cannot understand him, you cannot advance a step in reasoning with him, unless you first go and put your intellectual eye where his is.

It is no matter what the opinions are, against which you contend, you cannot contend against them to advantage, unless you understand them, and you cannot really understand them, unless you perceive them as they are perceived by the mind which they possess. If you do not perceive them thus, it is in fact something else that you perceive. If any opinion seems to you preposterous and absurd, and only such, the probability is that you could do no good to the individual who holds it, by discussion; for it is plain that it does not appear preposterous and absurd to him, and, therefore, the perception which you attack, is not the one which he maintains. It may be the same in name, and somewhat the same in substance; but in all those aspects and relations of it which constitute its life, and give it its hold upon him, it is different to you from what it is to him; and your discussion will be an angry dispute, in which neither will understand the other.

If, therefore, a young man, in referring to any error, as Atheism, or Deism, or disbelief in a judgment to come, says, "It seems utterly astonishing to me, that any one can

believe such an error. I do not see what he can possibly say. I should like to meet with one, holding it; it seems to me I could show him his mistake:"—if, I say, he speaks thus, it is pretty safe to infer, that he would act most wisely by letting the error alone. He does not understand it. In a discussion, he would not make the slightest progress. There would be a violent collision between him and his unbelieving opponent, from which he would recoil in a sort of maze, like a moth from a candle.

If he says, however,—"I do not think it surprising that such a man should be a Deist. Considering his education, his associates, and the position he occupies, I can see easily how the subject of revealed religion should present itself in such a way to his mind, as to lead him to disbelieve it;" if he says that, there is a little more hope. There is some ground for sympathy. The discussion can have a beginning; and if there can ever be hope of any progress, it is in such a case.

No one, therefore, can be qualified to attempt to lead any soul out of its errors, but by first *going to it*, in them. You must understand and appreciate the subject on which men err, as it presents itself to their minds. Perhaps you will shrink from doing this. It requires you, you will say, for the time being, to go over to the side of error, and look upon it with favorable eyes, and this is dangerous. It is, perhaps, the most dangerous work which we can engage in; and if the reader should consider his hope of bringing any persons out of the wilds of error, too feeble to justify his incurring the hazard of going on there after them,—to be lost, perhaps, himself,—I should most sincerely approve of his caution. But then, if he is deterred by this danger from qualifying himself suitably for the work, he must not undertake it. He can do nothing but exhaust and irritate himself, and fix his friend in his delusions by attempting to argue without this qualification.

(2.) You must not only *go to* the intellectual position

which your friend occupies, in order to begin the discussion, but you must keep with him all the way. You draw him out, as the magnet draws out the iron, by keeping in contact,—the moment you break from him, you lose him. You can do nothing at a distance, for arguments have little weight, unless the heart is open to receive them; and candor, good humor, and intellectual sympathy are necessary in order to keep the heart open.

Now it is very hard to avoid an immediate rupture, the moment you enter into conversation with a friend upon a subject on which you disagree. The course of things generally, is, that as soon as any thing like discussion is commenced, each party recedes as far as possible from the other, and by exaggeration, and overstatement, and pressing to extremes, they get to as great a distance as they can, and from these positions which they have respectively taken, they cannonade one another with merciless violence, each gravely expecting to drive the other over to himself. In some cases of moral intercourse between mind and mind, there may properly be a separation,—a want of sympathy. As where a man is rebuked for a known and admitted sin, or denounced for opinions which carry on the face of them their own condemnation, and are, in fact, only pretended opinions, assumed for selfish purposes. But where there is real error, where the mind is really deceived, you must go to it, and lead it out; you must keep with it all the way. If you break from it, it falls back again into a worse position than before.

To avoid this, you must not overstate any fact, or exaggerate the force of any consideration which is in your favor, nor underrate any thing which your antagonist may advance. Be honest and candid. Admit the force of objections and difficulties; listen attentively to what he says, not as mere matter of civility, but from an honest desire to know exactly how the subject stands in his mind. Do not be in haste to reply to what he says, but admit its

force, and take it into consideration. Thus he will perceive that your object is not victory, but truth; and as you show yourself willing to look candidly at the whole subject, he will, by sympathy, catch the same spirit, and you will thus go on together. As long as you can thus keep together, you may perhaps advance, but the moment you separate, he falls back, and your hold over him is gone.

(3.) Avoid arousing your friend, by opposition, to take ground in defence of his opinions. If you wish to fix a man most firmly on either side of any question, the surest way is to give him that side to defend. Hence the great danger and evil of discussions; they become disputes, and make each party more fixed and obstinate than before. Avoid, therefore, putting your friend upon his defence, or making an antagonist of him. You can do nothing with an antagonist. If he adduces an argument, or states a fact, do not reply to it, or contradict it; but on the other hand, by an honest question or two, draw it out more fully, so as completely to possess yourself of it, as it stands in his mind. If it is weak, do not make him think it strong, by putting him on the defence of it. If it is strong, do not impress it upon his memory, and give it undue importance, by arguing about it. In either case, trust to the great leading considerations which you have to adduce, as the means of overcoming its influence. With the greatest circumspection, you will find it all but impossible to prevent your conversation degenerating into a dispute. You may read and understand these principles, now, and admit their reasonableness. But when you come to apply them, you will find an almost insurmountable difficulty. In fact, the reader will be very likely to say, while reading these paragraphs, that the rules are very good in theory, but impossible to be kept in practice. I grant it. Or at least, I allow that it is *almost* impossible to preserve them,—it is certainly almost impossible, in endeavoring to convince a

friend of the erroneousness of his opinions, to avoid arousing him to a resolute defence of them. This is true, no doubt, and it is only saying that it is almost impossible to do any good, by reasoning with people about their errors.

(4.) Make it your great object to present to your friend, and to keep before his mind, those great leading considerations on which the evidence of the truth must rest, and not to discuss with him, the details, and difficulties, and objections which cluster around every great subject. It is but a few great considerations, which determine the conviction of the mind in all cases. The truth of Christianity, for instance, rests, in the mass of minds, on its great, visible, moral effects, and not on the details of that complicated argument which researches into its history have furnished, —nor on the possession of satisfactory answers to the thousand objections which have been advanced. It is, indeed, very important to possess these answers. There are certain occasions, and certain purposes for which they are essentially important. But in such discussions as we are speaking of here, the more exclusively the mind that is wrong is brought to look upon the great leading considerations which establish the truth, the better.

We are very prone to overrate the extent to which it is necessary that the many difficulties and objections which can be raised against the truth, should be met and answered. They must, to some extent, remain. The mind is full of them on every subject. All truth, whether believed or disbelieved, is connected with difficulties which we cannot remove. The most common doctrines of philosophy, such as that sound is produced by aerial vibrations,— and that the blood circulates,—and that cold is mere absence of heat,—and many other most unquestionable truths, are embarrassed with difficulties which it is very hard to solve. The course, now, for a wise instructer to take with his class, is not to call their attention too much to these, in vain attempts to offer satisfactory solutions. This would

be the way to spread doubt and uncertainty over their minds, in respect to the whole subject. He had better, when first attempting to inculcate the truth, admit these difficulties, and acknowledge their force,—but then present the great leading evidence, which is sufficient to establish the truth, notwithstanding them. In religious discussion, we should do the same. Our great object is to bring forward the leading considerations which balance the scale and determine conviction; and then to present these to the mind, and make as little reply as possible, to the counter considerations adduced in disproof. Thus you gain a double advantage; you secure the presentation of what must be the basis of conviction, if it is established at all, and you avoid that most imminent of all dangers, putting your friend upon the defence of his opinions, which would inevitably confirm him in them.

These principles, if understood and practised, will perhaps aid a little, but after all, we can promise the private Christian very little success in his efforts to do good, by reasoning with error. There are a thousand difficulties and obstructions in the way of gaining such an access to the human soul. There are some minds that cannot argue nor appreciate argument. They seem to have no powers of perception for a logical sequence. They go by authority, so far as they are influenced by others, and by mere notions originating in themselves. Then there are others who will not attend to you. While you are speaking, they are conning a reply, not to what you are saying, but to what they have heard said by others before. Then, there is a third class, so loose, and illogical, and irrational, that in one single sentence, you hear uttered or implied errors enough to lay you out work for an hour, in taking them up one by one, for examination and exposure. You, however, begin with one, but the first sentence which you hear from your interlocutor in regard to it, is another shoot at random, over the field of prejudice and error, and you give up

at once, in despair. Another person is so entirely away from you in sentiment and feeling, that you can get no common ground to start from. His ideas, and feelings, and habits of reasoning are all diverse. He lives in a different moral and intellectual world, and you cannot understand one another at all. He takes principles for granted, that you would deny, and if you turn aside to discuss one of them, you take for granted, immediately, what he does not admit, and thus you have no footing. Then there is pride, and the power of habit, and the influence of association, and authority, and interest, and the bias of feelings averse to the sacrifices which sound moral principle requires. When we consider the nature of these elements, we shall moderate our ideas in respect to the immediate effects which we can hope to produce upon them. Truth and logic, with all their power, are proved to be frail instruments among such moral forces as these.

The force of authority and personal influence, have a far greater control over men's opinions, and reason, far less than is generally imagined. Suppose, for example, that for the sake of trying an experiment upon human mind, and testing the real strength of truth, the philosophers of England should divide themselves into two parties, equal in talents and numbers, and enter into a controversy, making a question, for this purpose, of some undoubted truth. Let one party maintain, for example, the truth that the earth is in motion, and the other, the falsehood that it is at rest. The latter would, of course, pretend that recent discoveries and calculations had overturned the long received opinions, and that, after all, it was proved that it was the sun, not the earth that revolved. We must suppose that this latter party are equal in talents, and standing, and influence, with the others, and that they are believed to be honest and sincere, and that they maintain their cause with the same industry in arraying the facts

which seem to favor their cause, and in fabricating ingenious arguments which should exhibit the appearance of mathematical reasoning. Suppose the discussion to go on for a half century, what would be the result? "Why every man," you would at once reply, "of any intelligence and understanding, who would devote any proper attention to the subject, would be brought to the right side. The evidence for the truth in this case, is overwhelming." Very well: admit it. But what percentage of the whole mass of any people, are men of intelligence and understanding, and what percentage of those would have paid such attention to the subject, as to separate for themselves truth from falsehood, and to form an independent judgment of the case, and see distinctly the solidity of the arguments for the truth, and the fallacy of those for the error? A very small one. The result would probably be, that the mass of the people would be divided between the contending parties, pretty nearly in proportion to the numbers, and standing, and personal influence and popularity of the respective leaders, and the termination of the experiment would show that the opinions of mankind on almost any subject which they hear discussed, and on which they seem to form a judgment independently, rest, after all, upon the weight of authority, and not upon the perceived conclusiveness of the reasonings.

It is true, that on subjects of mathematical and physical science, where there is, in a general view of the great mass of mind, no leading bias one way or the other, there cannot be, for a long time, any such division of authority, as we have supposed in this imaginary case. The force of the argument will compel unanimity among leaders, and then the influence of authority, will secure the unanimity of the rest. But in moral subjects, this is not so. Take such a question as the true character and desert of Napoleon Buonaparte. The moral argument here will not enforce unanimity among the leaders of mind, and the

followers, swayed by the opinions or the representations, or the personal influence of those to whom they are accustomed to defer, will be divided too.

We cannot trust, then, in the expectation that truth will, in a world like this, necessarily make her way by our simply arming her with intellectual weapons, and sending her out to fight against error. The result of such conflicts will generally depend more upon the ability of the advocate, or rather upon his personal influence, than upon the goodness of the cause.

I ought, however, perhaps, to say in conclusion, though it may be scarcely necessary, that this chapter relates mainly to personal discussion between private Christians in the ordinary walks of life, and not to controversy among leading minds advocating diverse opinions before the public, for the purpose of eliciting truth by discussion, or placing on record, arguments to sustain it. This public controversy has its difficulties and dangers, immense and great, but this is not the place to exhibit them. The sphere of influence in which this book is intended to move, is a different one altogether. In that sphere there can be no question that disputation should hold but a very low rank among the means of doing good. Our means of promoting the spread of Christianity, is not to effect triumphs for it in debate, but to spread its gentle and noiseless influence. We are to exhibit it in our lives, we are to explain, and enforce, and exemplify its duties. We are to *express* its principles, and gain, by every means in our power, an influence for them among our fellow men. Thus the rigidity of argumentative disputation will be relaxed, and the moral influence of an alluring *exhibition* of the principles and duties of piety, will find an easy way where the most severe and scientific theological arguments for the truth, and refutations the most triumphant of error, would find every access barred and impregnable.

These remarks apply with peculiar force to infidelity. It

prevails to a vast extent in the world, and must, for some time, continue to prevail; and although the proof of the truth ought to be constantly before the community, so as to be accessible to every mind, yet to rely upon the logical force of arguments, as the main instrument for the expulsion of infidelity, is to mistake altogether, the nature of its power. Infidelity, as it has generally shown itself in this world, is not candid philosophical doubting of the mind; it is *rejection by the heart.* Its strength is not in its reasonings, but in its spirit. It is dislike to God, to penitence, humility, communion with heaven. It is love of this world, and of sin, and a determination to go on in its own way, without fear of a judgment to come. It is a spirit of hostility to God, and to his reign, and a determination not to submit to it. Now such a spirit, logic and reasoning can never change,—they do not even tend to change it.

The spirit of infidelity;—the lofty genius of Voltaire has embalmed and preserved its deformed and malignant visage, for all time, and we fear that his wretched soul will find that he has done it for all eternity too, by his famous watch-word, "Crush the wretch," applied to Jesus of Nazareth. Read the Savior's life,—consider his character, his mild, unoffending, gentle spirit,—his labors for the good of his race,—his patience, his forgiveness,—his cruel wrongs, and the submissive, quiet, unruffled spirit, with which he bore them. Read the whole story, and think of such words as "*Crush the wretch,*' applied to *him.* Oh, Voltaire, Voltaire, sad indeed, must have been the moral state of the heart which could have been aroused to anger, by the story of Jesus of Nazareth; sad the heart which could call that homeless victim of toil, and of patient suffering for others, a wretch, and which could meet his kind invitations, by a cry uttered forth to the whole civilized world, to arise and crush him. Do these malignant passions still burn in thy bosom, against him who would

fain have saved thy soul? We fear they do, for the strength of angry passion which sent forth that defiance, could carry it but a little way towards the eternal throne of the Son of God. The lapse of years shows that throne standing firmer than ever, and thy malediction has fallen back upon thine own head, and thou thyself art the crushed wretch now, for ever.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

The plan which I had marked out for myself in the volumes of which this is the conclusion, being now accomplished, nothing remains but for me simply to recapitulate some of the fundamental principles on which the views maintained in these works, are based, and then to bid my readers farewell.

These principles may be briefly enumerated thus.

1. Lofty and expanded views of the character and government of God. I have endeavored to lead the reader to look upon Jehovah as the Universal Spirit, pervading, and sustaining all things;—and to draw him away from the absurd image of ivory and gold, which the imagination of childhood paints, out into the mighty universe which spreads itself illimitably all around us, and shows us God's doings and character, in all the physical phenomena of nature, and in all the social and economical relations of man.

Such views of the great Jehovah, will alone free the mind from virtual idolatry. They alone will light up all nature with an expression from God, and enable us to realize, in the most complete and thorough manner, his continual presence and agency.

I ought, however, to warn my readers very distinctly of one danger arising from this view, and that is, that

by considering God as the universal agency, operating throughout the universe, they may lose sight of his *personality*. We may feel that God is the great Universal Cause, and forget that he is a watchful, moral governor over every one of us. This is Pantheism. It makes every thing God, and while it extends every where his presence, it destroys his personality. It has been a very common way by which men have escaped from the moral control of their Maker. Philosophers discovered it, and it has been, in every age, considered a very adroit, and beautiful mode, of escaping from the claims of repentance and faith in Christ. It is the way chosen by the philosophers, the educated, the refined. They change Jehovah from a person to a principle, they lose all sense of his moral watchfulness over them, and of their accountability to him. In fact, his very individuality is gone, and all the pressure of accountability to him, on their part, goes with it,—and yet they pride themselves upon the loftiness of their religious position, and retain and pervert all the phraseology of piety, to help them in the deception. They admire nature, and call it adoring God.

Now we must beware of this danger, and as we expand our views of the divine character, and begin to conceive of him as the ETERNAL AND OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT, we must not destroy his personality, nor lose sight, for a moment, of that strict and solemn accountability, to which he holds every intelligent creature that he has formed.

2. It has been another design of this work, to lead the reader to deep convictions of his own moral helplessness, as a sinner against God, and of the necessity of a radical change by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The degree of hopelessness and helplessness of a confirmed bad character, of any kind, is something which men feel, and understand, but which they do not like to express in language; for they cannot express it, without encroaching upon their theories of free agency. The strength and the

weight of the chain with which any established habit, or besetting sin binds the victim of it, is a great restriction to the boundless freedom which we love to attribute to the human soul. One kind of freedom is indeed boundless, in man,—the freedom with which the mental acts flow from the reigning desires. There is no outward restraint. The band which enthrals the human soul, is an iron rigidity within, and they who have ever really undertaken to grapple with any one sin, and to root it out from its place in the heart, will feel that sin is, after all, a slavery,—bitter, helpless, hopeless slavery.

Hopeless,—that is, if the poor victim is left unaided, in his struggles to get free. We may restrain the outward transgression, by such considerations as we may force before our minds, but how shall we compel these deceitful and corrupt hearts to cease from loving transgression, and wishing that it might be safely indulged. A case of confirmed intemperance illustrates the difficulty. I have known such a victim, of kind feelings, of honesty, uprightness, intelligence,—made the slave of the great destroyer of men,—and in his days of reflection he would mourn and weep over his ruin,—his broken-hearted wife, his suffering children,—and resolve, and promise, and fix himself in the utmost firmness of human determination, that he would never yield to temptation again. But the hour of temptation came, and his decision and firmness would melt away. With all his struggles, it would seem to him that he *could not* resist.

Could he or could he not? Was he free, or was he not free? Ah! he was free, and that very liberty was his destruction; for it was freedom to act according to the reigning desires of his heart, and these desires have been hopelessly corrupted by long habits of sin. So with the soul in its attitude towards its Maker. With feelings averse to God, and to holy happiness, and these steady, permanent, and tending to perpetuate themselves,—and then

entire, and unlimited freedom to act according to those desires, its case is hopeless. If a moral restraint from without, could intervene, there might be a hope of salvation; but when the desires are wrong, to be left to perfect freedom, is to make destruction sure. So that the entire, unconditional liberty of the sinner who is left to his own ways, is the very key-stone of his dungeon; it makes his moral ruin perpetual and hopeless. A thorough understanding of this, will lead to a self-abandonment, and a surrender to the Savior, so complete and unconditional, as to give real peace and happiness to the most wounded soul. It is this, only, which lays the proper foundation for happy piety.

That this view of the lost and helpless condition of man, is the true one, the study of our own hearts, observation of mankind, and the Word of God, combine to furnish a triple proof; and there is nothing to oppose to it, but theoretical difficulty. "For how," asks the unbeliever, "can you reconcile such views of the hopeless ruin of an immortal being, with the power, and benevolence, and holiness of God."

I cannot reconcile them,—and so the squirrel, whose limb a sportsman has shot away for his amusement, crawling into his hole in agony, presents a spectacle which it is equally impossible to reconcile with the power, and benevolence, and holiness of God. You cannot take a step towards the solution of either one of them;—not a single step. Men have talked and reasoned about the existence of sin and suffering, and attempted to explain them; and there is no impropriety in such speculations;—but they make no progress whatever, in making it plain to the human mind, how a single instance of sin and suffering can possibly exist in a world governed by spotless holiness, and by boundless power. But when you have explained how there can be one hour of sin and suffering, the difficulty is all over, for the explanation will answer as well for

the second hour as the first, and for every succeeding one. Just as when you have explained the formation of one drop, you have explained the whole shower,—and not only that one, but all other showers that ever have fallen, or will fall for ever. Vast and insuperable, therefore, as are the difficulties which hang over the prospect of the utter and perpetual moral ruin of any man, they are all removed by explaining any single instance of sin and suffering. Tell me how Judas could have betrayed his Master, and suffered such remorse and anguish for it, while on earth, and I will tell you how it can be, that he is sinning and suffering now; and I will repeat the explanation, for any other hour of his future existence, whenever you may call for it.

The theoretical difficulty, then, while we acknowledge its force, ought not to operate as a presumption against what our own experience, and the Word of God, unite to maintain, for the difficulty applies equally to what we *know* to exist, and therefore, though it appears insuperable to us, we are compelled to believe that there is a solution for it; and the solution which will cover one case, will cover all. The difficulty is not increased by multiplying the cases to which it will apply. Every separate portion of the existence of a fallen angel, or of a fallen man, may be considered a distinct example of the existence of sin and suffering, and whenever we are able to see the compatibility of one of them, with the boundless power and love of the Supreme, we shall understand the compatibility of all.

The doctrine of the bible, then, is, that sin perpetuates itself; and we see and feel this, its essential tendency, in all our experience of its nature. It does it, however, not by any compulsion from without, forcing man to sin, contrary to his desires, but by changing and corrupting those desires, and setting them permanently in the wrong direction. The desires and the heart thus corrupted, and alienated from God, freedom, of itself, becomes ruin, and any one who looks into his soul, with careful self-examina-

tion, to study its feelings towards God, and to make them what they ought to be, will find, after a few hard and weary struggles, that the representations of the bible in respect to the deathlike helplessness of the sinner, are too true. I have wished to draw the reader to these views. They are, I am convinced, fundamentally necessary. They, and they only, will lead to that humble attitude before God, and that simple reliance on his Spirit, which will lead to any proper progress in piety.

4. It has been the intention of this work to lead the sinner to trust in the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, as the atoning sacrifice, by which it becomes just and safe to forgive his sins. We escape a great many philosophical difficulties, I admit, by rejecting this view, and considering Jesus Christ as only a human teacher of moral and religious truth; but with the difficulties, we lose all the life and spirit of piety. The human soul has always, in every country and in every age, hungered and thirsted for a sacrifice for its sins, and it always will. The mind of man is so constituted, that it must instinctively feel that there is something incomplete and unfinished in transgression, until punishment, or something to take the place of punishment, has ensued. You cannot quiet a child whose conscience is wounded by some wrong towards yourself, that he has done, by simply saying you will forgive him. There is a moral instinct that expects something more. So the soul, in its maturity, when conscience is wounded by its sins against God, cannot be completely soothed, by offering to it mere forgiveness. There may be, possibly, repentance, as we have before shown, without a very distinct knowledge of the Savior; and also a very great diminution of anxiety,—but there cannot be perfect peace. Foreboding fears will linger in the heart, and anxious solicitude about the future, disturb its hopes of pardon. Then, besides, a vital union with the Son of God, as the Redeemer and Keeper of the soul, such a connection with him as the

Great Mediator, the Justifier, constitutes the great moral means of defence against future sin. It is the refuge to which the soul flies in its hours of trial, feeling that such a connection is just what it wants, and what it must have. We make resolutions, and break them. We renew them in hours of solitude and reflection, but when we are again in the world, they are again disregarded and forgotten,—bad principles and bad passions gradually and insensibly gain the mastery over us, and after repeated efforts and struggles, each returning hour of solitude and reflection, finds our condition more hopeless than before. Discouraged, disheartened, and almost in despair, the soul pauses in gloomy doubt, whether to renew again the hopeless toil, or give up all. Now it is at such a time as this, that the soul understands and feels the meaning of flying to Jesus,—appropriating his righteousness,—looking up for pardon, through his atoning sufferings,—and, in utter self-abandonment, casting all on him. You cannot make this phraseology intelligible to a worldly man, while in the midst of his worldliness, and never feeling the bitterness and the weight of the bondage of sin. But they who have felt these burdens, almost always find in the atoning sufferings of a divine Redeemer, just such a refuge as they most eagerly desire. It always has been so, in all ages of the world. The most devoted and consistent piety has always been coupled with the most distinct conceptions of the utter ruin and helplessness of man, and of his sole reliance on the influences of the Holy Spirit, for his sanctification, and on the obedience and atoning sufferings of a divine Redeemer, for his justification and pardon.

I do not deny that philosophical acumen may involve these views in very serious and real difficulties; and so it may any other subject whatever, that has as many relations as this has, to the unseen, spiritual world. There will always be plenty of difficulties, where any one is interested to find them. Our wisest course, therefore

is, to take home to our souls the view which is so clearly fitted for them, and which the obvious meaning of Scripture plainly authorizes; and to leave the difficulties for another day.

In respect to redemption by Jesus Christ, and the philosophical objections which may be urged against it, the soul will feel when it is really burdened with its sins, as a thirsty man before a fountain of water, with Berkeley by his side, attempting to prove to him that it is no reality. Though he cannot reply to the subtle argument, he will drink and quench his thirst; and so will we.

5. I have wished to inculcate liberal views in respect to all the essentials of Christianity. Just in proportion as the mind is turned away from the consideration of the moral ruin of man, and of the direct application of the great moral and spiritual remedy as widely as possible,—and is occupied about forms and organizations, and the details of theological speculations, just in that proportion will true piety decline, true, genuine love for the souls of men grow cool, and the subject become a partisan, a disputant, a manager, suspicious and jealous of sister branches of the church, and a dead weight upon the Savior's cause. We want to have our souls strongly interested in promoting, by any proper means, the salvation of men from their sins; and while we are steady and faithful in our attachment to the institutions and forms with which we have been connected, we shall, if our hearts are really set upon the promotion of God's cause, rejoice in the success of other laborers, and allow them to love their institutions and their modes of operation, as we love ours.

6. These works have endeavored to exhibit piety, as active, — going forth to the work of promoting holiness and happiness of every kind, and in every degree. This comparative diminution of interest in one's own private and personal pursuits, and desire to engage as a co-operator with God in promoting universal good, is at once,

the fruit and the evidence of piety; and the degree of genuine, heartfelt, persevering, interest with which we engage in our Master's work, is perhaps the best measure of the degree in which we possess his spirit. I have endeavored to delineate the temper and the feelings with which this work should be done. This spirit, I have represented as mild, gentle, patient, unobtrusive. It should take this form generally among those for whom these books are chiefly written. While, however, in our ordinary intercourse with mankind, we act in this gentle manner, we ought not to feel that all violent collision with sin is wrong, and condemn those, who, from the circumstances in which Providence has placed them, are led to engage in more violent struggles with sin. Such violent struggles are sometimes, though perhaps seldom, unavoidable, and we must not feel irritation or anger against those who use, what we consider, harsh or severe language in denouncing sin, or in measures to oppose it. Jesus Christ could rebuke sharply. He once drove sinners away from their work of wickedness, with a scourge; he described a class of guilty men as a generation of vipers, and called one of his disciples a devil. This should not, indeed, lead us to habits of severity and denunciation, but it should, at least, mitigate the censorious feelings which we are prone to cherish towards those who rebuke sin with a bluntness which we ourselves should not think of imitating. Moral remedies are as various as moral diseases, and he to whom Providence has, by circumstances, or by constitutional temperament, committed one class of them, should not censure harshly, those who have been entrusted with another. John ought not frown at the boldness of Peter, nor Peter look with contempt upon the mildness and gentleness of John.

My work is done. It is four years since these illustrations of Christianity were commenced; and the pen was